MASSIVE SUMMER PREVIEW

TOTAL FILM

JUNE 2016
ISSUE 245

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THE WORLD'S BEST MOVIE REVIEWS

THE NICE GUYS
Bantz with Crowe & Gosling

EXCLUSIVE

CAPTAIN AMERICA CIVIL WAR

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#TEAM CAP WHOSE SIDE...

JASON BOURNE

X-MEN: APOCALYPSE

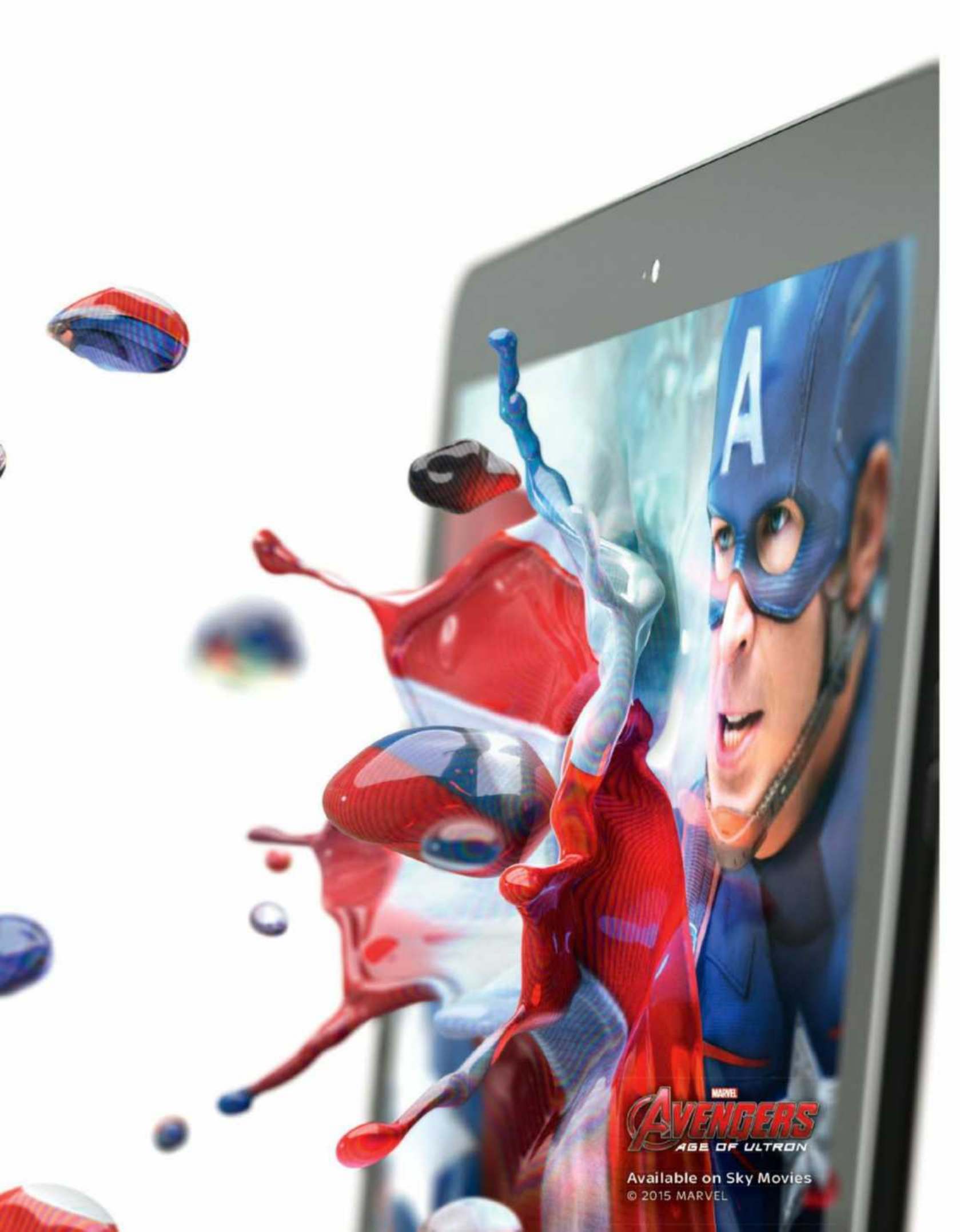
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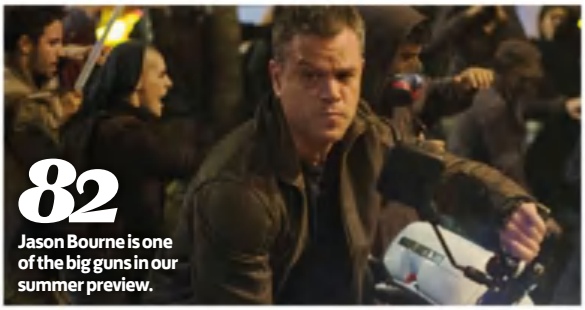
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dialogue

Mail, rants, theories *etc*...

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#Squadgoals

Who doesn't love a bit of fisticuffs in the cinema? An opportunity to nail your colours to the celluloid mast, pick a tribe, choose a side... I'm all about Team Batman, Team Jets, Daniel Cleaver over Mark Darcy and Professor X instead of Magneto. So Captain America: Civil War obviously floats my boat (Team Stark all the way) and is the perfect way to kick off our monster summer preview, rammed with rivalries, rumbles and box-office races. I chatted to Ryan Gosling and Russell Crowe as part of that – though to say whose team I was on in that particular pairing would be ungracious. Whose side are you on this summer? There's plenty to pick from... Enjoy the issue.

Jane

JANE CROWTHER
EDITOR



Fantastic *Total Film*...

Drop us a line:
totalfilm@futurenet.com

The ups and downs of making this issue...



STAR LETTER

Despite the inevitable surge in popularity of online digital streaming services like Netflix and Amazon, I really cannot escape the enjoyment and thrill of having the physical copies of my favourite films on Blu-ray. I can't be the only one who prefers that to just logging in and selecting a film from a long list. I love the buzz of buying new discs and of that great feeling of tearing open the cellophane wrapping for its first viewing. I'm hopeful that the physical format continues for many years to come!

BEN CROOKS, ST HELENS



What do the other good folk of Readertropolis think? Are you done with cracked cases and slipped discs? Or are you forever huffing and puffing over buffering? And if you've got any anecdotes about 'private' videos and swapped boxes à la Trainspotting *please share, remembering to include only a tasteful amount of grim detail. Ben and everyone with a letter printed here will receive a (physical!) copy of* Mr. Robot: *Season 1, out on Blu-ray and DVD from 11 April courtesy of Universal Pictures (UK).*



***Bone Tomahawk*: we got him in!**

Didn't send an address? Email it! There used to be a Mrs. Robot but things broke down.

High-(p)r(a)ise

Hail, Caesar!... and all Hail, Cinema! The Big Short of it is there is such a Divergent harvest of movies that I'd give them Triple 9 out of a 1,000. To shine a Spotlight on this moment, it's like my Youth with Hitchcock/Truffaut at their peak and it isn't an Anomalisa (sorry about that). Time Out Of Mind, I can't recall A Bigger Splash for moving pictures on the silver screen. So make Room in your diary, don't be Revenant and get to your cinema! PS I challenge you to somehow shoehorn Bone Tomahawk into this admirable imagery!

DAVEY WARWICK, VIA EMAIL

We'd say you tickled our funny Bone Tomahawk, but we don't want to be like a Dirty Grandpa.

>>

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dialogue

Mail, rants, theories *etc*...



Leo had those Oscar voters in his sights...

Awards zone

Having recently seen *The Revenant*, I had to write and say what a fabulous performance Leonardo DiCaprio delivered. He fully deserved his long-overdue Oscar win. Although he's been nominated on several occasions I still don't think DiCaprio gets the recognition he deserves. Virtually every film he's made has been of high quality and he never takes the easy route like some others, signing up for a superhero franchise just to boost his bank balance. It's amazing to think of what he'll achieve in his career if the quality of his performances carries on.
STEPHEN MCCARTHY, GLASGOW

'Every film Leo makes is high quality. He never takes the easy route'

Aye, Leo done good – and you just knew it was his year (mind you, we 'knew' it was Stallone's year too, and look how that turned out – with us being forced to eat our Mark Rylance-esque hat, that's how). And yes, it's a shame for Miller, although he's not as Oscar-less as Sly – he bagged one for 2006's Happy Feet. *Maybe if Charlize Theron had played Emperor Penguin Furiosa and The People Eater had brought his tap shoes the Academy would've backed* Max, *who knows?*

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It was great to see *Mad Max: Fury Road* grab a flaming fistful of Oscars. However, I personally think that George Miller losing out on the Best Director gong is the biggest Academy snub since *The Shawshank Redemption* went under the wheels of the *Forrest Gump* behemoth. Miller is a genuine visionary and it would have been refreshing to have seen his smoking slab of post-apocalyptic grindcore rewarded at the highest level.
TIM, COVENTRY

The Dredd zone

The strange law of movie themes coming in twos à la *Armageddon*/*Deep Impact* or *Volcano*/*Dante's Peak* has now escalated into threes with the new 'Vs' theme, with the likes of Batman/Superman, Punisher/Daredevil and Captain America/Iron Man. And to comment on another recent trend – the R rating. Is there a hope that this could help bring about the much-petitioned-for *Dredd* sequel? Surely a movie more in need of a sequel there never was?
MICHAEL DEMETRIOU, EAST SUSSEX

OFFICE SPACED

Chatter 'gems' overheard in the *Total Film* office this month...

"I just don't want that genre of sandwich today." **"Mr Stay-Puft... did he actually do anything wrong?"** "Rosie found a Techno Bear the other day." **"If I died, would I get a mention in *Dialogue*?"** "Go big or go hard!"



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TOTALFILM ONLINE ON OUR WEBSITE...



AVENGERS: INFINITY WAR – EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW
www.gamesradar.com/avengers-infinity-war-review/
It's the MCU movie so big they have to split it in half; here's a mega-info dump on the two-parter that'll involve *68* characters, and probably more by the time they finish.



THE 25 BEST ACTION MOVIES ON NETFLIX
www.gamesradar.com/best-action-movies-on-netflix/
There are gazillions of action movies out there – but to save you a trawl, we've picked 25 of the best. Get ready for some high-octane streaming.



DEADPOOL 2: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW
www.gamesradar.com/deadpool-2-review/
It's only been a couple of months since *Deadpool* hit cinemas, but there's already a ton of sequel info out there – have a read, and then vote for your ideal Cable. Gibson? Lang? Knightley?

@TOTALFILM



FREE CHAIR OF THE MONTH
https://twitter.com/totalfilm/status/705758580616654848
To celebrate the release of the Coen Brothers' Hollywood send-up *Hail, Caesar!*, everything we need to make a movie. Apart from camera, crew and cast. Minor details – don't worry, we'll fix things in 'post'.



SCARY CAKE OF THE MONTH
https://twitter.com/totalfilm/status/705790765289639936
It took us a while (well, 10 mins) to pluck up the courage to try this creepy treat courtesy of #GoodnightMommy. But we thought it best to wolf it down in one go.



INDIANA JONES 5 NEWS: YOU RESPOND
https://twitter.com/totalfilm/status/710730735339085824
"They gonna do the same as *Star Wars*? 'Raiders Of The Retrieved Arch'?" @spacebob563; "I love the characters but time for a change?" @GeofWolfenden; "Is J.J. Abrams directing?" @Monkiimagic; "Oh, the humanity!" @AdamStraker1

TV REVIEWS GAMESRADAR.COM/TV



Game Of Thrones: S6 is almost ready... but are you? Do some prep with our sister mag *SFX*'s guide to all the characters old and new at www.gamesradar.com/game-of-thrones-cast/ (beware – spoilers if you haven't seen S5!). And be sure to check out the coverage of all the other cool telly shows out there.

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Forget *Batman V Superman*. The superhero smackdown I'd pay good money to see is Judge Dredd v Batman. I remember the *Judgement On Gotham* comic book in the '90s and it was a right royal ruckus. Reckon Karl Urban as Dredd could kick Affleck's Bat behind from here to next Sunday and back again! Let's get ready to rumble!!!

PHIL SLOAN, BEXLEY

Poor ol' Sly – is there no love left for him?! But yes, another Dredd *would be good, but to save any character-rights nightmares, let's have him skip Bats and battle Judge Reinhold instead. Winner fights Judge Judy.*

Dawn Of The 'Ted

You asked we need more superhero movies [*Is It Just Me?*, TF*244*]. Well I think we need more British superhero movies. When is *Super Gran* going to get the big-budget treatment? And what about a crossover, like 'Bananaman vs SuperTed'? The film writes itself – and just imagine the money they would bring in from all that merch! SuperTed tea cosies... Bananaman pregnancy tests... Super Gran-branded cigars... The possibilities are endless!

OWEN HOLLIFIELD, CAERPHILLY

Not sure the advertising standards folk would be wildly thrilled about some of those items being pushed to nippers, unless you're thinking of a more 'grown-up' reboot. SuperTed *drops the 'Super' and sits swearing on the sofa with Mark Wahlberg? The dark truth about why Spotty is so-called?*



The turn of the zoo

When reading your latest issue, I noticed you called Disney's latest animated feature *Zootropolis* instead of *Zootopia*. Is that an error or has the film been renamed for Britain?

MELISSA ENGLISH

It's a (Europe-wide) renaming – reportedly to avoid any trademark kerfuffle with a safari park in Denmark named Zootopia. It's not the worst name change in the world; besides, they wouldn't take any of our suggestions – 'Mammal Mia!' 'Animalisa', 'Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them'. Talking of which...

Love/hate thing

I hate *Harry Potter*. Hate the fact that so many are still obsessed with it. Hate the fact that the films were rubbish and the acting was laughable. Hate the fact that the books are apparently still the only books in the world. But thankfully your exclusive cover for the 'to be' rubbish *Fantastic Beasts* was absolutely stunning. One of the best yet. Thank you for making the world of *Harry Potter* slightly bearable.

MARTIN JACKSON, MILTON KEYNES

You're welcome. OK, if you're a Potter *hater then* Beasts *probably won't have you cheering like Jabba the Hutt let loose on the Hogwarts dessert trolley. But we're hopeful – unlike some fantasy prequels, at least it's got characters whose fates are unknown, rather than a bunch of ungroomed men who you know are either going to live to old(er) age or don't care about anyway.*

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The next issue of FILM on sale 6 May

TOTAL FILM

Which super-team are you on? Tell us yours at @totalfilm #teamtf!

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Printed in the UK by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd on behalf of Future
Distributed by Seymour Distribution Ltd, 2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT.
Tel: 0207 429 4000 Overseas distribution by Seymour International

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Welcome to the movies!

buzz

EDITED BY **JORDAN FARLEY**



Freak show: Jacob (Asa Butterfield) discovers Miss Peregrine (Eva Green) and her strange charges.



‘She’s like a scary Mary Poppins, and she can turn into a bird’
TIM BURTON

FIRST LOOK!

Scary Poppins

MISS PEREGRINE’S HOME FOR PECULIAR CHILDREN

Freaky kids, creaky houses, Eva Green, YA fantasy. Tim Burton makes himself at home...

“Weird kids: it’s something that I’ve dealt with and been interested in for a while,” says Tim Burton of his latest movie, exciting hopes that his Jane Goldman-scripted adap of Ransom Riggs’ novel could be a homecoming hit for the crazy-haired king of gothic giggles and outsider-geek love.

Burton’s career has run patchier than a tie-dyed shirt in the wash lately, so the rousing of a starry cast for a vigorously imagined YA fantasy could be his golden comeback ticket.

Asa Butterfield stars as Burton-esque lost boy Jacob, who grew up hearing wondrous tales about a strange orphanage from his gramps. When grandad is murdered, Jacob visits coastal Wales to find Miss Peregrine’s pad still exists, with *Dark Shadows*’ show-stealer Eva Green as the titular Miss, a role the *Penny Dreadful* star seems made for: “She’s like a scary Mary Poppins, and she can turn into a bird,” says TimBu. Sold.

Alongside stars Rupert Everett, Judi Dench, Chris O’Dowd, Allison Janney and Samuel L. Jackson, Burton assembled a battery of fresh-faced (and, apparently, very professional) kids to play the striplings, whose skills include invisibility, fire and super-strength. And if that sounds like an enticing mix of *The Goonies* and *X-Men* in natty period goth-wear, you’re not the only one psyched. “I couldn’t be more excited if you attached electrodes to my toes,” Riggs gushes. Ouch. Let’s hope Burton saves the shocks for his doubters. **KH**

ETA | 7 OCTOBER *Miss Peregrine’s Home For Peculiar Children* opens later this year.



FIRST LOOK

Island on the screen

POPSTAR: NEVER STOP NEVER STOPPING | Andy Samberg on living the dream and keeping it real. Nothing's gonna stop him now...

"We pitched other names to the studio," Andy Samberg told Jimmy Kimmel. "I pitched them '*Gremlins 3*' and they were like, 'No'. So I was like, 'All right, *Popstar: Never Stop Never Stopping*!'" Which is a daft title, of course, but a clear improvement on *Top Secret Untitled Lonely Island Movie*.

The secret's now out in poster and trailer form, all looking like *Justin Bieber: Never Say Never* crossed with Katy Perry exposé *Part Of Me*, or a US variant on Ricky Gervais' Anglo-side mock'n'roll romp *Life On The Road*, also due here late-August. It looks madly silly too, but that's what you want from a movie by *Saturday Night Live* mock-pop trio The Lonely Island, whose last film was 2007's little-seen *Hot Rod* and whose doltish ditties include 'I Just Had Sex' ("The best 30 seconds of my life!").

Judd Apatow has long wanted to produce a movie with Samberg, Jorma Taccone and Akiva Schaffer. His wish comes true via the sorry story of Samberg's Conner4Real, a pop star with an army of fans ('Connfidantes'), a 30-strong entourage and a stadium-sized ego, which pops when a flopped solo album forces a reunion with his old boy band.

"It takes a village to make me look dope," says Conner4Real, whose villagers include a roadie (Bill Hader) for guitars he never plays and unicorn trainers. It took a village of co-stars/cameos to make the film too, including Usher, Imogen Poots, Pink, Snoop Dogg, Simon Cowell, alt-harpist Joanna Newsom (Samberg's wife4real), Martin Sheen, a "so expensive" Adam Levine hologram and, as Conner's silver-tongued PR, Sarah Silverman.

"I'd love to get Conner to the point where he's just kind of everywhere," deadpans Silverman. "Like oxygen or gravity... or clinical depression." Whether Conner gets wet or not, *Gremlins*-style, expect no less this summer. 4Real. **KH**

ETA | 26 AUGUST *Popstar: Never Stop Never Stopping* opens this summer.

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Gangsta pap: Conner4Real (Andy Samberg) has got his sights set on superstardom.



‘It takes a village to make me look dope’
CONNER4REAL

Listen Up, HOLLYWOOD

This month, the Abrams-teased **Cloverfield 3**. Buzz pitches four possibilities...

CROSSOVERFIELD

In the first step towards a shared Abrams universe, this film would see a group of amateur filmmakers flee the *Cloverfield* monster rampaging through the city only to run into the alien creature from *Super 8*. Eventually both beasts face off against each other in a monster mash-up that is only resolved when both are banished to a deserted island where – TWIST – the Smoke Monster from *Lost* enters the fight.

THE HANGOVERFIELD



Following the events depicted in the first film, the *Cloverfield* creature wakes up with a splitting headache surrounded by rubble with no recollection of the previous night. Retracing its steps, it uncovers a hilarious series of farcical events and misunderstandings, which all lead to the embarrassing discovery that – TWIST – it actually got married to a Vegas stripper. Mike Tyson will make a cameo appearance.

TROMAFIELD

Put the sequel in the hands of legendary low-budget studio Troma to make a hilariously cheap and bad-taste monster movie complete with a plot about toxic chemicals and exploding bags of ketchup for the gory scenes. And – TWIST – the giant rampaging creature will be played by a guy in a rubber suit brandishing kitchen utensils. Surely this is must-see cinema.

THEY THINK IT'S ALL OVERFIELD

Following on immediately from the first film, a relieved general public celebrate the death of the creature, until – TWIST – it rises up ready to kill again. More military bombings put it down for good, until – TWIST – it's somehow still alive! It turns out that – TWIST – the creature has been dead all along and everyone has been seeing a ghost, but also – TWIST – it was all a dream. Or was it? TWIST. **MLo**



‘I had lunch with two spooks. They were brilliant and discreet’

Between takes

Damian Lewis
talks traitors, television and tastes.

John le Carré is enjoying a revival, with TV’s *The Night Manager* and now *Our Kind Of Traitor*. Are you a fan?
I’ve read him and enjoyed him. Books like *Smiley’s People* and *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*. I read those years ago – the Cold War L e Carré. I’ve read *The Night Manager* too; Larry Kasdan gave me a copy when we were making *Dreamcatcher*. He said, ‘You must play this!’ I read it and stuck it on my shelf.

How would you describe Hector, your character in *Our Kind Of Traitor*?
Hector is a maverick loner who has constantly got himself into trouble by speaking truth to authority and continues to get himself in trouble. And again, within the short space of the movie, decides to act unilaterally and break ranks, to do what he thinks is the good thing, the right thing.

What research did you do?
I went to Special Forces Club and had a lunch with – for want of a better word – two spooks working for the British government. They were brilliant and discreet, while also being indiscreet – happy to share titbits.

Did *Homeland* change your career dramatically?
Well none of us foresaw what *Homeland* would become, would be. It became a phenomenon. Brody was a complicated character and people loved to hate him, or loved him, sided with him in spite of everything. But he made people feel uneasy and the relationship with Carrie was an uneasy relationship. Noone was ever quite sure who he was. And I don’t think it’s easy to cast someone after that.

Your movie choices – like *Keane* – have always been unique. How come?
I’m very happy doing the stuff I do. I love doing things like *Dreamcatcher*... Aliens exploding out of people’s bottoms! And I loved doing *Keane*. I think I have quite Catholic tastes.

You’re back on TV as a hedge fund manager in *Billions*. What did you learn about these guys?
That the financial industry now is a big casino! You can create any bet you want, just like you can create any bet you want at Ladbrokes. That’s essentially what these guys do. **JM**

ETA | 13 MAY *Our Kind Of Traitor* opens next month.

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Voyage of discovery: Anna meets Marnie, the occupant of an abandoned mansion across the marsh (below).

EXCLUSIVE

Sad sayonara

WHEN MARNIE WAS THERE | Studio Ghibli bids farewell with Hiromasa Yonebayashi's gentle, poignant animation.





It has been two years since Hayao Miyazaki signalled the end of Studio Ghibli, retiring after *The Wind Rises*. Yet it would not be the studio's swansong.

That job now falls to Hiromasa Yonebayashi, Miyazaki's relatively young (42) protégé with only one directorial credit (2010's *Arrietty*) to his name. Can his new film, *When Marnie Was There*, end the studio on a high?

"Yes, I'm aware of the pressure!" Yonebayashi laughs. "Though what is central to Ghibli is to make animation for children. That's what Miyazaki has been saying for a long, long time. So I tried to make this film with that in mind, to be fit for Studio Ghibli's last film."

As it happens, *When Marnie Was There* could not be a more fitting end for Studio Ghibli, which goes out not with a bang, but with a gentle, reflective story on loneliness, friendship and family. Based on the novel of the same name by the English author Joan G. Robinson, it follows Anna (Sara Takatsuki), an emotionally distant young girl who is sent to live with relatives in the countryside. Once there, she struggles to make friends, but becomes obsessed with an abandoned mansion and the girl, Marnie (Kasumi Arimura), who lives there. Their relationship blooms into something sweet, maybe even romantic, but Marnie possesses a sad, poignant secret.

"It's a really moving story," says Yonebayashi, "There are many children who feel lonely and I'd like this film to encourage them to take one big step forward. At the same time, it's not just angst. I wanted to portray her growing up, realising that the people around her love her. And it's through Marnie that she realises she is fortunate – that she is happy."

Of course, one of the big questions hanging over *When Marnie Was There* is whether it really will be Studio Ghibli's final film. Co-founder Toshio Suzuki has since clarified that the company is taking a "pause" to consider future plans. Yonebayashi is "not sure" what these future plans will be, but is certain that Studio Ghibli's legacy is already clear to see in films like *Inside Out*.

"We have been a huge influence for creators not just in Japan, but around the world," he says. "The films of Disney and Pixar, for example, are almost Miyazaki-esque. Traditionally, Disney/Pixar didn't put protagonists as human beings, but Ghibli was different. For the last 15 years we depicted struggles and loneliness and anguish, we showed the releasing of souls, and that influenced Western cinema a lot. So for them to make a film in that line is to carry on Ghibli's legacy – with a studio or without a studio." **SKe**

ETA | 10 JUNE ***When Marnie Was There*** **opens this summer.**

EXCLUSIVE

Arabian sights

A HOLOGRAM FOR THE KING | Tom Hanks finds himself in the desert for the impossible Dave Eggers adap that wouldn't have happened without him...

"I called Dave Eggers the day the book was published, literally as soon as I turned the last page," says director Tom Tykwer, bowled over by the writer's 2012 novel about a washed-up American businessman who becomes a new man in Saudi Arabia.

"I knew exactly what the film could be – not just as an adaptation but as a film with its own unique voice. But there was only one name in my vision – stamped on every page of the book when I read it – and that name was Tom Hanks."

Approaching Hanks after their previous collaboration on *Cloud Atlas*, Tykwer didn't have too much convincing to do. "Tom's a big reader and he'd already read the book. I told him that I wanted to turn it into a comedy, and I told him that it would only work if he did it... I didn't really give him much choice actually!"

The story of a lonely salesman hauled out of his rut, *A Hologram For The King* sees Hanks clashing cultures in Saudi Arabia as he tries to sell IT in the middle of the desert. As absurd as it is melancholy, the film opens with Hanks dreaming of singing in a Talking Heads video and ends up with him shooting an M16, screaming at absentee sheikhs and taking a knife to a mysterious lump on his back that *might* be a sack of spiders.

Shooting in Morocco to avoid the Saudi authorities, Tykwer did a bit of Method directing as research, spending a month living in the same Jeddah hotel that inspired the book. "I lived the book and I *became* the character," muses Tykwer. "I met a local guide that took me to his father's place in the middle of nowhere, and we ran into the exact same situations that happen in the film... We even accidentally entered the forbidden city of Mecca because we missed our exit on the motorway!" **PB**

ETA | 20 MAY *A Hologram For The King* opens next month.

'I lived the book and I became the character'
TOM TYKWER



Dune and dusted: Tom Hanks stands in the sand.

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High school team-up: The gang minus their multicoloured morphing suits.

FIRST LOOK

The powers that be

POWER RANGERS | An all-new Mighty Morphin' crew makes another attempt to save the world.

It's morphin' time! Tigerzord! Mastodon! Pterodactyl! Er... stegosaurus? No? Woolly mammoth?

It doesn't matter just yet – there isn't much morphenomenal action happening in this first look at the de-suited *Power Rangers*. But, while it may be distinctly more 'catalogue model' than 'Turbo' or 'Megaforce', it does at least give us a glimpse at the soon-to-be colourful team all together.

From left to right, we have R.J. Cyler (*Me And Earl And The Dying Girl*) as Billy aka The Blue Ranger; Naomi Scott (*The Martian*) as Kimberly aka The Pink Ranger; Ludi Lin (*Monster Hunt*) as Zack aka The Black Ranger; pop star Becky G. (*Empire*) as Trini aka The Yellow Ranger; and Dacre Montgomery as team leader Jason aka The Red Ranger.

The film, directed by Dean Israelite (*Project Almanac*), powers up the original premise once more, with five high-school teenagers again chosen by destiny to save the world from evil alien villainess Rita Repulsa, played by Elizabeth Banks in the film.

"I think what [*Banks*] loves is the opportunity to really embrace the insanity and deliciousness of Rita Repulsa in terms of how weird and wonderful that character was," Israelite told *Entertainment Weekly*.

But what of the colourful costumes? "One key that's different to the Power Ranger suits is that they're not really suits that people get into," Israelite said. "They're suits that morph onto our kids, so they already have this almost metaphysical quality to them." It sounds like the final *Power Rangers* look is going to be Mighty interesting. **MLo**

ETA | 24 MARCH 2017 ***Power Rangers*** **is currently filming.**

Snapped up

Stars share photos from the front line of filmmaking. **This month: Baywatch**



Dwayne Johnson @TheRock

One-man publicity machine Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson is at it again. The new Mitch Buchannon is single-handedly responsible for every scrap of big-screen *Baywatch* news released so far. But before you go thinking he's overworked, bear in mind his duties typically involve posing next to exceptionally beautiful women in bikinis. It's a hard Rock life... **JF**



22 February: The all-important beach speech about what it means to have manly Alpha balls.



25 February: Great day on the beach.



3 March: Every great story starts with a great villain...



6 March: Me and @zacefron refuse to quit in a tyre shrugging contest that lasted for hours.



5 March: The two most iconic #BAYWATCH characters of all time.



9 March: She takes #BAYWATCH to another level.

ETA | 19 MAY 2017 ***Baywatch*** **opens next summer.**



BLU-REY

Secret Wars

STAR WARS | As The Force Awakens prepares to dock on disc, Buzz brings you a breakdown of the Blu-ray extras...

SECRETS OF THE FORCE AWAKENS: A CINEMATIC JOURNEY

The biggie (as it should be, with a mouthful title like that...). A 70-minute Making Of that takes a chronological trek through production, opening with fears and hesitations about re-starting *Star Wars* ("Part of me thought, 'no, that's a terrible idea,'" reveals Mark Hamill) and ending with lots of hugs. If a few of the anecdotes are by now familiar, there are plenty of gems to unearth, from Daisy Ridley's knockout audition tape to on-set footage of *that* Han/Ren moment (which Adam Driver calls "the scene that terrified me the most"). Discover which main character almost didn't make it past Act I, gawp at Andy Serkis mo-capping Snoke atop 25ft-high scaffolding and chortle as Carrie Fisher quips "We waited this long? I looked better 10 years ago..."





FEATURETTES

There are six mini-docs in total (seven if you include the brief but stirring piece on the 'Force For Change' charity initiative). Ideal kick-off point *The Story Awakens: The Table Reads* brings to life that 2014 cast-reveal photo, with Hamill on narration duties and some of the newbies bricking it.

Building BB-8 offers the Blu-ray's funniest/oddest sight: a bloke in lime-green puppeteering BB-8 on rods like he's entering a wheelbarrow race. *Blueprint Of A Battle: The Snow Fight* reveals some things are still (very) old school – a bloke painting trees on a big sheet – and captures the buzz (ahem) of crafting the big 'saber showdown.

Crafting Creatures gets under the skin/fur of some of the 105 beasties made, including Simon Pegg and Warwick Davis' characters. There's the obligatory FX-progression footage in *ILM: The Visual Magic Of The Force*, plus a few Millennium Falcon secrets even the hardest-core fans might not know. And lastly *John Williams: The Seventh Symphony*, where we see the 84-year-old maestro tickled to be back in the musical cockpit – but also musing bittersweetly, "I don't know how many more of these I can do..."



DELETED SCENES

If the absence of a commentary track is the Blu-ray's biggest non-event, the scant deleted footage runs a close second. Six scenes lasting four minutes in total, one of which – 'Finn Will Be Fine' – is almost shorter than its title. No Constable Zuvio or any of the extra bits in Maz's castle that made it into the novelisation. But there's a nice Leia one-liner, Kylo Ren snooping round the Falcon (the pick of the bunch) – plus another chapter in the saga of Poe's hand-me-down jacket... **ML**

ETA 11/18 APRIL *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* is available on digital download this month, followed by Blu-ray/DVD.

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Funny people

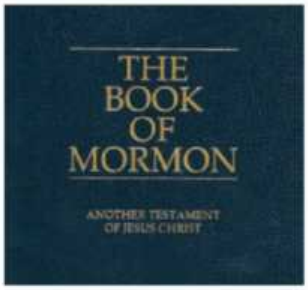
Comedy heroes on what makes them laugh. This month: **Josh Gad**



Name: Josh Gad
Job: Actor, writer, producer
Films: *Frozen*, *Pixels*, *The Wedding Ringer*, *The Rocker*, *21*
Upcoming: *The Angry Birds Movie*, *Beauty And The Beast*, *Russ & Roger Go Beyond*



MY COMEDY PRESENT
Chuck, my character in **THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE**, is this speed demon. It's like his mouth goes faster than his brain. He's just so unbelievably fun. The idea that this guy just can't stop himself, both physically and vocally, was something that spoke to me. And of course, the cast that was assembled is just out of this world as well.



MY COMEDY PAST
THE BOOK OF MORMON is probably the crowning comedic achievement, just by virtue of the challenge itself. Eight shows a week for a year-and-a-half, sometimes twice a day. Audiences can be fickle and change on a dime; it was daunting. And also the opportunity to work with Trey Parker and Matt Stone and Bobby Lopez was really amazing.



MY FAVOURITE FUNNY MOVIE
I don't think it's fair to pick one. I'll give you five! **CADDYSHACK**, **GHOSTBUSTERS**, **BACK TO THE FUTURE**, **GROUNDHOG DAY** and **ANIMAL HOUSE**. Those five movies account for my passion with regard to comedy, and my desire to pursue it from my youth when my brothers would sit me down and put on a VHS tape. They left an indelible mark on me.



MY COMEDY HERO
The person I learned the most from was **BILLY CRYSTAL.** He's a guy that I, again, grew up with, whether it was presenting the Oscars or *The Princess Bride* or *City Slickers*. So for me to have the opportunity to play a proverbial game of tennis with him, in terms of laying out a joke and lobbing it over the net, was a remarkable experience for me.



MY COMEDY FUTURE
When I was first approached about [*Le Fou in*] **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST** I wanted to make sure that we didn't fall into the trap of a two-dimensional stock character. So Bill Condon and I sat down, along with the writers, and we tried to challenge ourselves to expand on his emotional journey, while retaining what audiences fell in love with in the first place.



THE MOVIE THAT MAKES ME CRY WITH LAUGHER
I just saw the preview to **SAUSAGE PARTY** and was on the floor dying. In the '80s, you saw more movies like that that embraced those hybrids. I hope that tradition continues because I think otherwise, comedy can get stale quickly. **JF**

ETA | 13 MAY *The Angry Birds Movie* opens next month.

THE SHORT LIST

This year's five scariest Glasgow Frightfest movies...

1 PATCHWORK
Three women  wake up physically inside one body in this revenge movie which retains its comedy while its leading lady (or should that be ladies) creaks and snaps her way out of a laboratory. The perfect balance of black comedy and body horror.

2 BASKIN
The journey of  five Turkish police officers into a hell dimension of butchers, masochists and murderers is visceral, nasty and disturbing. Yet while it might have limb removal, the searing of flesh and literally buckets of blood, there's a beating heart under the depravity.

3 THE MIND'S EYE
 The kind of pre-'00s, Stephen King-influenced gorefest that horror needs more of. There are shocks, scares and one of the most absurd sexual juxtapositions in recent history.

4 SOUTHBOUND
Like *Trick 'r Treat*,  this is a horror anthology where each tale seeps into the next. There's something beautifully arid about the stories: America's highways are a never-ending dustbowl of horror and the atmosphere is enjoyably unsettling.

5 THE WAVE
Despite showing  the people of a Norwegian town being murdered by a tsunami from falling rocks, *The Wave* is still in disaster movie territory. But you do care as you realise the mountain isn't happy to stay where it is. **LB**

Fore more, go to gamesradar.com/5-scariest-frightfest-movies-rated-heartrate/

HINDSIGHT CORNER!

Stars eat their words...



SALLY FIELD

The Amazing Spider-Man (2012)

April 2014: "We get to create a world for ourselves and we get to do a lot of improvisation and it's just so fun."

March 2016: "You work it as much as you can, but you can't put 10 pounds of shit in a five-pound bag."

REX FEATURES



Go West: Roland (played by Idris Elba, below) heads towards the titular Dark Tower.

FIRST WORD!

King's quest

THE DARK TOWER | It's the new Lord Of The Rings. Sort of.

Described by author Stephen King as his "magnum opus", the eight *Dark Tower* books (totalling 4,250 pages) have been attracting, and defeating, film adaptations since 2007.

J.J. Abrams came and went. Ron Howard likewise. Javier Bardem, Viggo Mortensen and Russell Crowe all circled lead character Roland Deschain, the last of a knightly order of gunslingers who moves between the Old West-alike 'Mid-World' and the modern world as he quests for the Dark Tower, nexus of time and space. But now, at last, the gigantic project is truly headed our way...

CASTING THE DIE

Idris Elba has signed on as Roland, so quick on the draw he could out-shoot James Bond, and Matthew McConaughey is confirmed as his nemesis the Man In Black (who is also the Big Bad in King's post-apocalyptic epic *The Stand*, though he goes by the name of Randall Flagg). On 1 March, Elba tweeted McConaughey saying, "You have one new follower" – a decent gag given first book *The Gunslinger* sees Roland pursuing the Man In Black – and the Oscar-winner replied 'Come and get me, I look forward to it'. As do we.

THE MAN IN CHARGE

The project began life at Warner Bros with sister company HBO also seen as a possible outlet (why not go multimedia, given there are not just the *Dark Tower* novels but also Marvel comics and a videogame?) but is now at Sony, with *A Royal Affair*'s Nikolaj Arcel at the helm. Arcel has said of the first movie, due in February 2017, that "a lot of it takes place in our day" – perhaps a ploy to hook viewers before the action morphs into a western. Did you see those *Hateful Eight* numbers?

ORIGIN STORY

The Dark Tower is also a dark fantasy and science fantasy, tinged with horror. Originally inspired by Robert Browning's poem 'Childe Roland To The Dark Tower Came', King was also influenced by Tolkien's Middle-earth, Arthurian legend and *The Good, The Bad And The Ugly*. He even created a language for his characters, High Speech. It is a life's work: "I started these stories as a senior in college, sitting in a little shitty cabin beside the river in Maine, and finally this thing is actually in pre-production..." gasps the 68-year-old writer.

EXTENDED UNIVERSE

So the big question is: how many movies can we expect? Is the 2017 film collapsing several novels into one film (King has confirmed that it starts in the middle of the books' narrative), or might there be eight movies à la the *Harry Potter* series? Right now, nobody knows, and you can bet the answer lies in the box-office figures of the first instalment. But given the story takes in multiple universes, there's enough material to run and run. We'll certainly follow... **JG**

ETA | 17 FEBRUARY *The Dark Tower* opens next year.

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01: Jaws 02: The Terminator 03: Jaws 04: Halloween 05: Dredd 06: Troll Hunter 07: Whiplash 08: Temple of Doom 09: Back to the Future 10/11: Star Wars 12: Jaws 13: Rocky III 14: Aliens 15: Jaws 16: Aliens 17: Big Trouble in Little China 18: High-Rise 19: Groundhog Day 20: Blade Runner 21: Ex-Machina 22: Blade Runner 23: The Blues Brothers 24: Temple of Doom 25: Rollerball 26: Alien 27: Children of Men 28: What We Do in the Shadows 29: Kill Bill 30: The Karate Kid 31: Jurassic Park 32: The Thing 33: The Usual Suspects 34: Robocop 35: Reservoir Dogs 36: Big 37: The Dark Knight Rises 38: Ghostbusters II 39: Alien 40: An American Werewolf in London 41: Blade Runner 42: Back to the Future 43: Sunshine 44: Shaun of the Dead 45: Jurassic Park 46: Dredd 47: Jaws 48: Back to the Future 49: The Godfather Part II 50: Temple of Doom 51: Ghostbusters 52: E.T. The Extra Terrestrial 53: Rocky 54: Blade Runner



'I like to put myself in trouble'
MATTEO GARRONE

EXCLUSIVE!

Killer queen

TALE OF TALES | Gomorrah director Matteo Garrone gets Grimm.

"It's a movie about women," acclaimed Italian director Matteo Garrone tells *Buzz* just a few hours after the Cannes premiere of his barmy fantasy horror *Tale Of Tales*. It's also a movie about sea monsters, pet fleas and hula-hooping bears. Like we say, barmy.

Loosely adapted from the twisted tales of 17th Century Neapolitan poet Giambattista Basile – whose work inspired everyone from the Brothers Grimm to Walt Disney – Garrone's portmanteau fantasy divides its attentions between three kingdoms. In Selvascura, Salma Hayek's barren Queen sends her husband (John C. Reilly) on a mission to kill an underwater beast; in Roccaforte, a crone (Shirley Henderson) is wooed by Vincent Cassel's unwitting Casanova king; and in Altomonte, Princess Viola (Bebe Cave) demands to be married off to a courageous suitor while Toby Jones's monarch raises a colossal flea.

Claiming "I like to put myself in trouble" Garrone opted to make the ambitious project his first English-language film, partly to attract the widest possible audience and partly to work with English-language actors he admired. But Garrone was also adamant that the film would retain its Mediterranean identity. "What's very important for the movie is to not lose our roots. For an English movie with an international cast, I think the movie's very Italian."

In adapting a writer little-known outside his native Naples, but whose influence can be seen in every modern fantasy story, Garrone had the freedom to bottle the spirit of Basile's stories without remaining rigorously faithful to the plots. "I love the way Basile moves from comic to dramatic; from grotesque to something that can

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Fantasy world: King of Longtrellis (John C. Reilly) and Queen of Longtrellis (Salma Hayek); (below) fantastical characters and creatures.

be very pure and light," Garrone enthuses. "It's not like working with *Pinocchio* where everybody knows the story. The impact is much stronger because it's much more unexpected. We put something of our imagination inside it, but the base, the soul, was from Basile."

The only trouble came in deciding which of Basile's 49 "Tales" to adapt – even a mere three proving a challenge to cram into one film. "It was quite difficult for us to shoot," Garrone admits. "With *Gomorrah* we had the same problem – there were so many possibilities. It would be perfect for a television series."

Unlike most fantasies, which go down the CG-heavy effects route, Garrone was keen to keep as much of his film practical as possible, likening the film's air of artificiality to Méliès and Powell and Pressburger. But with Python-esque grotesquery and occasional nudity, it's far from child friendly. So who is it for? "It's important to say that it was not for kids, but in the 17th Century, there was no difference between kids and adults. It was for people – kid, adult, whatever. That's why it's so dark and sometimes almost horror." **JF**

ETA | 17 JUNE *Tale Of Tales* opens this summer.



EXCLUSIVE!

Backwards step

MEMENTO | Remake Memento? Think again, says Guy Pearce...

To put it mildly, the recent announcement that Christopher Nolan's breakthrough movie *Memento* is due for the remake treatment sent shockwaves through Hollywood. Monika Bacardi, who co-runs AMBI Pictures, the company that picked up the remake rights after acquiring the library of Exclusive Media Group, announced: "We intend to stay true to Christopher Nolan's vision and deliver a memorable movie that is every bit as edgy, iconic and award-worthy as the original."

Told in reverse, Nolan's 2000 thriller about the tattoo-clad, memory-addled Leonard Shelby, struggling to search for his wife's killer, came out of nowhere to gross almost $40m and claim two Academy Award noms, including Best Original Screenplay. As the film's original star, Guy Pearce, who played the amnesiac Shelby, wryly tweeted: 'Why would they remake it? We all know how it starts.'

"That was my attempt at humour," chuckles Pearce, when *Buzz* caught up with him recently. But rebooting a one-off is no laughing matter, he says. "One of the things that made *Memento* so incredible was that it was original in its execution. I don't know if it will then lose something if you do it a second time, unless you come up with something equally original."

In his eyes, it's an exercise as foolhardy as re-recording another band's song. "You would never attempt to cover a Radiohead song," he says. "I don't think covering *Memento* is a great idea, unless you do the $200m Tom Cruise extravaganza version and you set it in a whole futuristic world, and you Radiohead the shit out of it. But there was something about Chris' unique quality that will be hard to supersede." JM

ETA | TBC The *Memento* remake is currently in pre-production.

REX FEATURES

It Shouldn't Happen To A Film Journalist



Editor-at-Large Jamie Graham lifts the lid on movie journalism. This month: **sitting through terrible movies.**

A few weeks ago, US critic Leonard Maltin confessed to being so appalled by *Zoolander 2* he walked out with half an hour to go, convinced he'd seen quite enough to give Ben Stiller's return to the fashion world a good dressing down.



"Is that Leonard Maltin over there? Is he... leaving? Quick, Blue Steel!"

Twitter, naturally, fought over this juicy titbit like piranhas in a fish tank, with many applauding Maltin's stand ("Life's too short, bro") and many more pointing out it was his *job* to watch the movie. Do refuse collectors sack it off halfway through their route because they've had enough? (Actually, mine do, but let's not digress.) And what if that unseen half hour offered up some outstanding gags or a choice cameo?

I, for the record, belong to Team Stay-To-The-Bitter-End, and have never forgotten the wise words that an esteemed critic slurred into my ear at a party when I was just starting out: "Every film, no matter how bad, has one line of dialogue or one camera move or one *something* that's of interest." And so I can say, with some pride and a good deal of regret, I've never walked out of a film. Better (or worse) still, I've never stopped a DVD or hit the fast-forward button to truncate the anguish.

Of course, it helps that I'm a sucker for pain. I try to tell others, and even myself, that it's because I believe you have to watch the bad to appreciate the good, and that it's crucial to see as much as you can to identify trends and provide context. But really it's because I'm an addict and will happily watch any old crap. Yes, real life is going on outside my window, but oftentimes I'd rather close the curtains and waste 90 minutes of my time on Earth watching Adam Sandler and a shitting donkey. So while I'd like to think I possess exquisite taste and my good colleagues at *Total Film* always take one look at my end-of-year Top 10 list and label it 'pretentious', I also laughed regularly during *Mrs. Brown's Boys D'Movie* and have seen *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* four times – once more than I've seen *The Godfather: Part II*.

'I'm a sucker for pain, an addict, and will happily watch any old crap'

Now let's be clear: I don't think any of the movies listed previously are misunderstood, underrated or even any good (well, apart from *The Godfather: Part II*, obviously). But I did find enjoyment in them, a different kind of enjoyment to that which I glean from *Persona* or *Taxi Driver* or any other masterpiece you care to mention. It's like the six-pack-and-pizza ethos that's often applied to action movies taken to the nth degree – how better to park your brain than to watch a movie so irredeemably awful you can power down into an unblinking, unthinking stupor?

It's relaxing. It's fun. And if you want to get all deep about it, it's the closest I can get to retreating to my childhood and the naïve joy of simply watching a movie. Those were the halcyon days when cinema washed over me and into me, before I read reviews, before I tuned into Barry Norman's TV show, and before, even, I knew there were people behind the camera (or, indeed, that there was a camera).

Or maybe I just like shit films?

Jamie will return next issue...
For more misadventures follow: @jamie_graham9 on Twitter.

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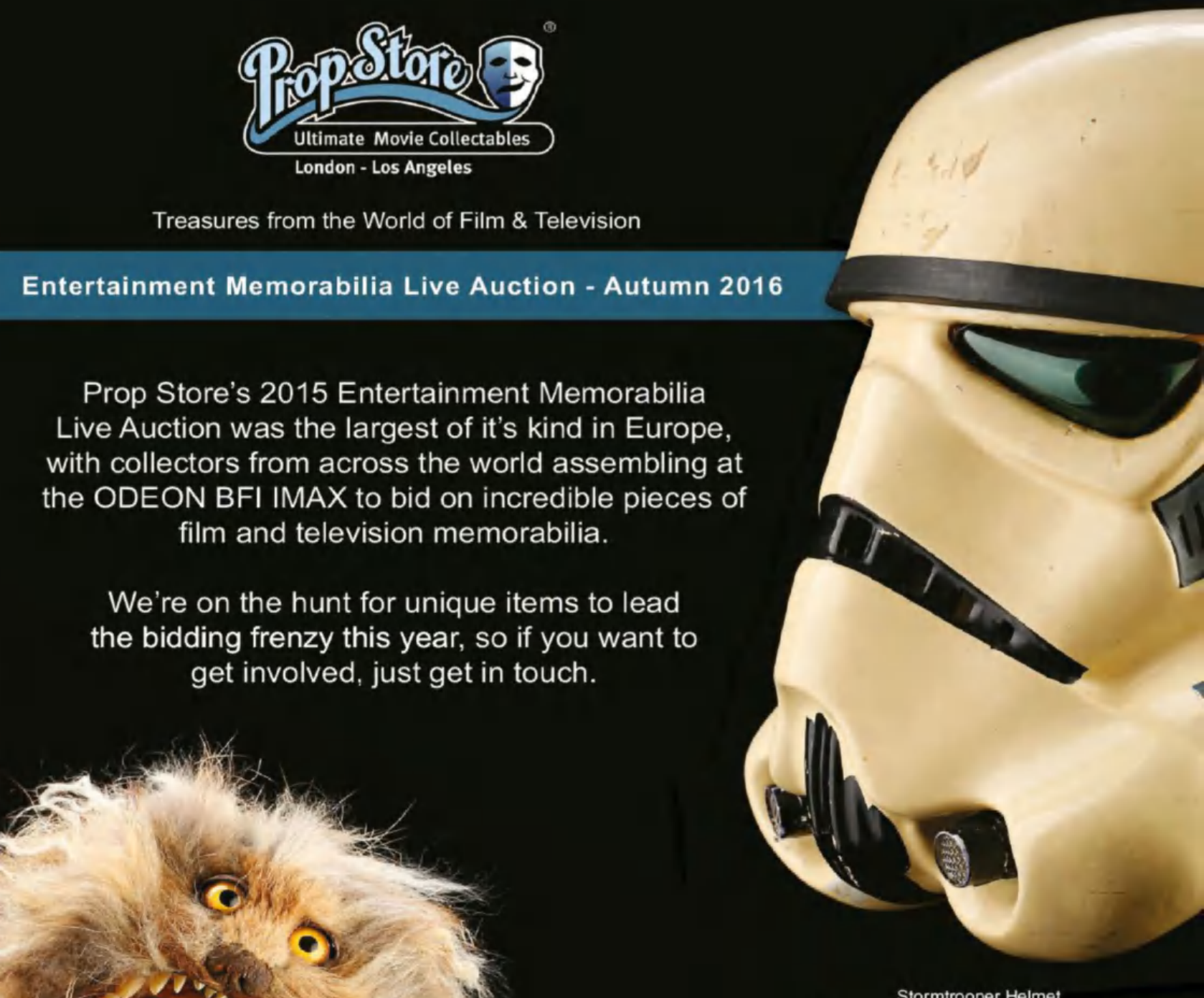
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FLASHBACK

This month: Issue 116, July 2006

Let's do the time warp as we look back at classic issues of Total Film...


TOTAL FILM

SPECIAL COLLECTORS' ISSUE

SUPERMAN RETURNS!

'Now You'll Really Believe!' The Scoop On Singer's Spandex Sensation

FROM REEVE TO ROUTH The Full History Of The Greatest Superhero Ever

'Metropolis Will Be Mine!' Exclusive Interview With Lex Luthor

SHOCK REPORT! KRYPTONITE Are You At Risk?

MAN OF STEEL BACK FROM MYSTERY EXILE

THE CITY OF METROPOLIS was stunned today, following the shock return of Superman – aka "The Man of Steel" – after a six-year absence.

CONTENTS ... LETTERS ... BUZZ ... EVERY NEW MOVIE REVIEWED AND RATED ... LOUNGE ... QUIZ

Splash! Powerboatings up a perfect storm 84

'My son is Satan!' Omen 666 shocker 70

Warning: this film can damage your health 92

COVER STORY

Superman Returns with one of the all-time-great *TF* covers, featuring a fancy lenticular frame morphing original Supes Christopher Reeve into the new kid from Krypton, Brandon Routh. Routh's Reeve-reincarnated mannerisms weren't the only thing that made him perfect for Bryan Singer's four-colour Man of Steel. "When I was six years old I would dress up in my Superman pyjamas," Routh told us. Sadly, the film was a flop, and our optimistic assertion that, "If all goes well at the box-office, Routh will be wearing the kiss-curl for at least another two Super-movies" must have felt like a Kryptonite shiv in the gut.



THE INSIDE SCOOP

The other headline news in the *TF*-themed *Daily Planet*? The remake of *The Omen*, with director John Moore displaying some extreme misguided hubris: "Pay your 10 bucks, see the movie and if you hate it, I'll give you your money back." That must have been rather costly. Elsewhere Jason Reitman addressed the lack of nudity in early screenings of *Thank You For Smoking* following rumours Tom Cruise had Katie Holmes' sex scene nixed: "This college kid was going, 'I thought I was going to see tits!' I said, 'You should rent *The Gift*, you'll get plenty!'"

QUOTE ME ON THAT

"My mum has been really on my butt about the fact that I always make movies where I look really weird, so I said I'd try and make a movie where I looked more sophisticated."

Milla Jovovich

OLD NEWS

Speed director Jan de Bont was hotly tipped for shark-attack epic *Meg* – about an 80ft, 100,000lb aquatic beast, with Guillermo del Toro set to produce... Until it went the way of the Megalodon. Jon Turtletaub is now attached to direct.

Tarantino's *Death Proof* had found its Stuntman Mike... in Mickey Rourke. The regular Robert Rodriguez collaborator was cast as the psychotic stuntman who murders women with his crash-proof car before dropping out, only for Kurt Russell to nab the role.

The UK's first outdoor film festival launched by Stella Artois. The summer event, in Greenwich Park, featured live music, theatre and film. But with only one movie screened at the end of each day it was slim pickings for film fans.

With the Cannes Film Festival approaching we picked our most anticipated films of the fest, including *Pan's Labyrinth*, *A Scanner Darkly* and *Volver*. All that anticipation for *Southland Tales* seems a bit silly now though.


PA

TF INTERVIEW DONALD SUTHERLAND

The icon on *Don't Look Now*'s sex scene and the changing of the guard.

ON *THAT* SEX SCENE

"It was like going into an execution chamber. There was the bed and Nic [*Roeg*] and Tony Richmond with their unblimped Arriflex cameras... It was that mechanical. But on screen Nic made it melancholy and lovely."

ON THE PERKS OF FAME

"I remember going to a screening of *Kelly's Heroes* with a lovely young woman once. We came out, she looked at me and said, "How could you do that picture?" I never saw her again. I thought I was going to get laid."

ON AUDITIONS

"I have to audition all the time! The people who run ABC and Touchstone, they're all kids in their 30s. Kids! They haven't seen any of the pictures I've done. They've seen *Backdraft*, *JFK*, but they haven't seen *Klute* or *1900* or *Casanova*..."

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agenda



The One To Watch

Daisy Ridley is blasting off.

"J.J. said to me 'Do you really want this?' And I said, 'If you believe in me then I'm OK with that!'" Believing in Daisy Ridley may be the best decision J.J. Abrams made on *The Force Awakens*, the unknown 23-year-old not only holding her own against beloved grump Han Solo, but emerging as the hidden hero at the heart of the new trilogy.

As the new Luke, Ridley has an entire galaxy resting on her shoulders, with persistent rumours that Rey may be a Skywalker herself. Expect at least some answers in the Rian Johnson-directed *Episode VIII*, which recently kicked off filming on Luke's nifty island retreat. "When we went back to Skellig Michael to do the opening of *VIII* it was so crazy doing the same scene with a different crew of people... It's such a good story, seriously. Luke is so cool in this one, really!"

Ridley is also in talks to star as a young Lara Croft in the *Tomb Raider* reboot, and has a budding music career in the offing after a surprise collaboration with Barbra Streisand on a to-be-revealed project. But first there's a certain space saga to headline. "We've got this incredibly strong female character. There's something about this girl that people can feel... something about her that's going to broaden the story. It's an amazing feeling." **JF**

ETA | 18 DECEMBER 2017 ***Star Wars: Episode VIII*** **is currently shooting.**

MARCO GROB / TRUNK ARCHIVE

The need-to-know...

BRIGHT

David Ayer and Will Smith have settled on their next project, but it's not *Suicide Squad 2* (yet). Instead the pair will reunite on *Bright* – a high-concept cop thriller in which a human police officer (Smith) partners with an orc (Joel Edgerton) in order to find a powerful magic wand. *Chronicle*'s Max Landis penned the script, which is said to mix the grit of Ayer's own *End Of Watch* with cult sci-fi buddy cop movie *Alien Nation*. Intriguingly, Netflix won a bidding war for the film by stumping up a rumoured $100 million production budget. Alternative title idea: *The Stream Team*.





WHERE'S WALLY?

Or should that be *Where's Waldo*? – the latest unlikely property heading to the big screen courtesy of producing duo Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg. The perennially popular picture books aren't known for their brain-bending narratives but early versions of the script were reportedly "built upon a time-travelling element, where Waldo accidentally activates a time machine and must find a way to get back to the love of his life, Wilma". The film has been stuck in development hell for years, darting between studios and screenwriters like eyes in search of Wally's distinctive red and white jumper, but one thing's certain – expect *a lot* of crowd scenes.

SPIDER-MAN

After Tom Holland's web-slinging debut in the *Civil War* trailer came news that Disney Channel star Zendaya has joined the cast of Jon Watts' *Spider-Man* reboot. In other Spidey news, Sony is said to be pushing ahead with a solo Venom movie written by Dante Harper.



THE MUMMY



Universal's monster-verse launching *Mummy* movie has been peeling back the bandages on its cast, with *Jurassic World*'s Jake Johnson and *Peaky Blinders* star Annabelle Wallis signing up for the contemporary tale as a special forces soldier and scientist respectively.

THE PREDATOR

Get to the sequel! Having failed to "stick around" for the urban jungle-set follow-up, *Predator* star Arnold Schwarzenegger could be returning for the Shane Black-scripted fourth film, with the pair set to discuss the possibility over lunch. Oh, to be an invisible eavesdropper on that date...



The scale

ON FIRE



Disney Animation
It may have been shown up by Pixar in the noughties, but on the back of *Zootopia*'s success Disney Animation Studios is now on a run that puts it on a par with its celebrated sibling.



The Mermaid
Forget *The Force Awakens*, China has a new box-office champ – fantastical rom-com *The Mermaid*. The film, from *Kung Fu Hustle*'s Stephen Chow, made a staggering $415 million in two weeks.



Videogame movies
With *Warcraft* and *Assassin's Creed* looking to break the videogame movie curse it's no surprise that an *Assassin's* sequel and an adaptation of classic sneak-em-up *Thief* are already in the works.



Gambit
The beleaguered X-Man's solo movie has dropped off the release schedule, with suggestions it may have been bumped to October 2017. Doug Liman is currently set to direct.



The sea
Seems audiences aren't so hot for the wet stuff anymore, with Disney's aquatic disaster movie *The Finest Hours* reportedly losing the Mouse House as much as $75 million.

COOLING OFF

JUSTICE LEAGUE



Having already played the single most faithful comic-to-screen character to date in J. Jonah Jameson, J.K. Simmons is jumping ship from Marvel to DC, signing up to play Commissioner Gordon in Zack Snyder's *Justice League* double-bill.

REX FEATURES, PA

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PHOTOGRAPHER: ISAAC STERLING PHOTOGRAPHY
HAIR: J. MICHAEL MAKEUP: ANTON K

The Talent

Lana Condor is lighting up the X-universe.

"I really am such a normal person. Right now, I'm sitting on my couch with my pillow!" laughs Lana Condor. For once such claims aren't a ruse – the unknown 19-year-old landed the role of fan favourite mutant Jubilee in *X-Men: Apocalypse* after just her third audition. "I'm hoping to see if this acting and whatnot pans out. I'm working really hard..."

Were you an X-fan before you got the part?
To be honest, I was a huge *Avengers* fan! I saw *Days Of Future Past* at the midnight premiere, but I hadn't seen the other films. Obviously as soon as I got it I watched all of them religiously. And the cartoon. And read all the comics. I got pretty obsessed.

How was it working with Jennifer Lawrence?
It was ridiculously amazing. Once I got the role, my first thought after, "Oh my goodness, I'm going to be in X-Men," was "Oh my goodness, I'm going to be in a film with Jennifer Lawrence!"

What was it like having superpowers?
They would attach a wire that had LED lights at the end to the palm of my hands, but every time I used them they shocked me! I didn't say anything because I didn't want to come off like high-maintenance. In fact, it helped me because I assumed every time I used my power it would hurt.

Do you have a dream role?
I have the weirdest obsession with paintball, so I'd love to do something like a girl soldier. I'm also terrified by anything paranormal, so it might be fun to do a paranormal horror, because it wouldn't take much to be truthful! **JF**

ETA | 18 MAY ***X-Men: Apocalypse*** **opens next month.**

'Every time I used my superpowers I got shocked'



Lucy Boynton is hitting the high notes.

"I watched a lot of Saoirse Ronan interviews," laughs Lucy Boynton of her preparation for taking on an Irish accent in feel-good musical *Sing Street* for director John Carney (*Once*, *Begin Again*). "I've always loved musicals," beams the 21-year-old English actress. "*Moulin Rouge* is one of my favourite films."

How did you end up getting involved in *Sing Street*?
It was one of those scripts you read and you get to the end and it's just like, "I *have* to play this role!" I was auditioning when *Begin Again* came out, and I thought, "Now I really do have to get this role, if [*John Carney*] makes movies like this."

How would you describe Raphina, your *Sing Street* character?
She's kind of a muse character, but actually she's much more than that because she's a very hurt and lonely person. There's the huge '80s hair, the big make-up, and the colourful jewellery, but it's a way of creating a facade.

Can you tell us about the films you have coming up?
Don't Knock Twice was so much fun: I spent the entirety of filming running through the dark covered in mud and blood. And *Let Me Go* couldn't be more different; it's based on the true story of a mother who abandoned her daughter to go to work at Auschwitz.

Is there a bucket list role for you?
Tennessee Williams is my favourite playwright, so I have my eye on the role of Maggie in *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*. I'd love to play a Norman Bates role – a psycho role. But my goal is just to play as wide a variety of characters as I possibly can. **MM**

ETA | 20 MAY *Sing Street* opens next month.

The Talent

'She's kind of a muse character'

MAARTEN DE BOER / CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES

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The Spotlight

Girls powerless: *Mustang* highlights five orphan sisters' fight for freedom from religious oppression.

Turkish delight

MUSTANG | Director Deniz Gamze Ergüven explains how her Oscar-nominated drama came to be sired...





"I'm so tired of that comparison!" sighs Turkish director Deniz Gamze Ergüven when *Agenda* mentions *The Virgin Suicides*, the 1999 picture to which her striking debut *Mustang* has oft been likened. To be fair, her film and Sofia Coppola's have much in common, both being first features by actresses turned writer-directors that, in addition to having attention-grabbing premieres at Cannes, tell of sisters locked up by religious relatives. Ergüven, though, prefers to cite Pasolini's *Salò*, Bergman's *Summer With Monika* and Don Siegel's *Escape From Alcatraz* as influences on a film that – when not juxtaposing the untamed sensuality of youth with a patriarchal society's blinkered intolerance – has its feisty lead character plot a jail-break every bit as ingenious as the one Clint Eastwood pulled off in 1979.

It's small wonder *Mustang* has found enthusiastic support around the globe – enough, in fact, to see it nominated for the best foreign film award at this year's Oscars. (*Son Of Saul* wound up pipping it to the prize.) Not too shabby for a film that lost its producer three weeks before shooting, a catastrophe that had ramifications not just for Ergüven but for the unborn child she was carrying at the time. "It was not nice to have that ugliness be my baby's first sensation," she admits. "I was literally being betrayed, in a very ugly way. The film was shafted, the crew began to fall apart and everything I had put into place was going up in smoke. But then a few days later, another producer came in and saved my life."

Ergüven's language may seem emotive, but it befits a story in which the incarceration of five orphan sisters for the 'crime' of playing with boys sees their very lives hang in the balance. Their world, in a remote village some 600km away from Istanbul, is one in which any contact with the opposite sex is oppressively monitored, right down to a woman's wedding night when her marital bed-sheets are inspected for virginal blood. "A doctor told me about a bride who was taken to hospital because she had not bled," Ergüven recalls. "With families like that, it's possible they'll kill the girl right there and then."

'I was literally being betrayed, in an ugly way. The film was shafted'

Happier times await Ergüven herself, who might now be able to make the film about the 1992 LA riots (*Kings*) she had initially hoped would be her first feature project. "It was my child for five years and I had a hard time leaving it," says the 37-year-old. "Even today I feel bruised, like I've fallen off a horse. But I have a strong feeling we 'un-dig' films, almost like archaeologists. They're already there with their own lives, and we just pull them out..." **NS**

ETA | 13 MAY ***Mustang*** **opens next month.**



Curses: *Deadpool* is treading the path to R-rated success.

The Investigation

The Deadpool effect

Is mimicking the mouthy merc a wise idea?

IF YOU BELIEVE WHAT YOU read, a venereal-class R-rated rash has hit tentpole films. *Wolverine 3* may well grant Logan more clawed penetration action. *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice* will get an R-rated Ultimate Edition on disc, presumably involving more sensuality and Jena Malone's unnamed character suffering something horrible. And if Marvel succumbs? Then Rocket Raccoon's demands for 'spare' parts will, surely, screech off the leash.

Essentially, the story goes thus: *Deadpool* has dropped an F-bomb on movies, the effects of which will long continue to itch. Either despite or because of its R-rating, Tim Miller's Ryan Reynolds-starrer owned the US box-office top slot until *Zootropolis/topia* rolled in. $675m (at the time of writing) worth of global returns against a $58m budget isn't just a good haul, it's a challenge for others to match. So far, Miller and writers Rhett Reese and Paul Wernick's Marvel adap is the third highest-grossing R-rated movie in the US ever, behind *American Sniper* and *The Passion Of The Christ*. Added up, those figures could keep tentpoles in a thigh-lock of saucy, self-aware, savagely violent irreverence until the boner gags droop.

Other comics adaptations – beyond the obvious big-hitters – flesh out the case for the R-for-ripple effect. *Deadpool/X-Men* producer Simon Kinberg has tentatively suggested *X-Men* spin-off *X-Force* might be R-rated. "I think there are some stories that could be R-rated," Kinberg told *Collider*. "I don't know what they are; I mean I think the mainline *X-Men* movies have their own tone, which is a more operatic tone. It's more dramatic, it is more PG-13 in a way. *X-Force* I could see being R-rated, and who knows?"

The producer of *Death Note*, to be directed by Adam Wingard, sounds equally confident about the Manga adaptation's grown-up pitch.

> ***'Deadpool's haul is a challenge for others to match'***

"It's definitely for adults," said Roy Lee. "[*There's*] zero chance it will be below an R-rating."

If these films are the result of *Deadpool*'s game-changing effect, it isn't hard to see why it has happened. True, there have been R-rated superhero movies before. Matthew Vaughn's adaptation of Mark Millar's *Kick-Ass* could not have been less. And in case anyone thinks *Dawn*







Levels of lurid: ***Suicide Squad*** **is sticking to its PG-13 guns, *Wolverine 3* (top right) will have a harsher edge and *Batman V Superman* (right) will get an R-rated home version.**

Of Justice's DVD/BD certification boost is *Deadpool*'s doing, remember Zack Snyder's *Watchmen* was "Rated R for strong graphic violence, sexuality, nudity and language." So maybe we'll see Batman being 'sensual' to oddly placed Leonard Cohen songs. Joy.

Yet none of these films, or sundry *Blade*s/*Punisher*s, matched *Deadpool*'s success. Nor did any emerge in the same super-saturated superhero market, most entries in which operate on the belief that PG-13/12A is where the target audience lies. Add the two points together and you get something like this: if studios want the comic-book cash cow to keep lactating (clue: they do), variations on the theme will be needed. R-rated upgrades could do the trick.

Swearing in

Enter James Gunn, *Guardians Of The Galaxy* director. Writing on Facebook, Gunn dished out strong words to industry news portal *Deadline*, who quoted an unnamed studio exec on the gap between *Deadpool* and the MCU. "The film [Deadpool] has a self-deprecating tone that's riotous," said the exec. "It's never been done before. It's poking fun at Marvel. That label takes itself so seriously, can you imagine them making fun of themselves in a movie? They'd rather stab themselves."

Rightly, Gunn countered that Marvel's mix of superheroes and sardonic self-mockery runs deep in *Ant-Man*, *Iron Man* and his MCU entry. And he made a crucial point: "For the theatrical experience to survive, spectacle films need to expand their definition of what they can be... They can't just be copying what came before them."

Sounds obvious, perhaps, but recent movie history tells us how quick studios are to forget the risks of succumbing to a "something effect" for the sake of trying to repeat a lightning strike. Consider the stygian serial-killer movies that followed *Se7en*, or the volume of self-aware slasher films following *Scream*, or the number of creatives who couldn't survive an interview without using the word "grounded" after *The Dark Knight*. The trend for "expanded universes" might be a case of The Marvel Effect: we'll see how that pans out for Warners/DC, *Ghostbusters* and *Star Wars*. (Probably very well in the latter case, at least, but still.)

In this frame, some "suits" have distanced themselves from *Deadpool*'s influence. "We don't have any plans to make R-rated Marvel movies," Disney CEO Bob Iger said, relieving audiences of any fear that the *Avengers* movies might start resembling embarrassing fan-fic. As for *Suicide Squad*, arguably the DC pic most likely to go R, DCU producer Charles Roven spoke: "I think right now we're going for the PG-13. I don't know that that's going to materially change. We can give that movie the edge that it needs and still maintain a PG-13."

The fact that these conversations are live proves *Deadpool* has had an effect. But if its 'effect' does not catch on, it might not be a bad thing. Fan forums raged when – random example – *Terminator* films emerged without an R-rating, but lots went wonky with the last two *T*-films that had nothing to do with certification. And not all properties suit the R-rating: *Spider-Man* doesn't need bulletholes in his butt any time soon.

By contrast, *Deadpool* was a perfect storm of integrated ingredients. It wasn't just a saucy superhero movie but the hybrid result of a star-led fan-galvanising campaign, the chance to fix a previous on-screen cock-up (*X-Men Origins: Wolverine*), leaked test footage, a lengthy writing process (PG-13 and R-rated scripts) and a cleverly handled last-minute $7m budget cut (the writers responded by condensing three characters into Angel Dust). Factor in the result's fourth-wall-busting humour, charismatic leads, romantic streak, open sexuality, tight pacing, rapid gag count and close match with the source material, and you've got something that isn't easily repeated. Sure, studios may try. But *Deadpool*'s main lesson might be this: you can't put a price tag on a one-off. **KH**

R you kidding?

When the *Deadpool* effect may not work...

CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR



War, civil? What the shit? Tony Stark turns the air blue ("Language!"), forgetting that 12A has done well for Marvel.

THE BFG

"Whizzpopping" and "zippfizzing" assume R-rated meanings as the giants' true "horrigust" appetites are revealed. A children's classic is slaughtered.

STAR TREK BEYOND

Justin Lin takes the underwear shot that worked so well for *Into Darkness* to the next level. Spock's raised eyebrow is set to perma-stunned.

STAR WARS: ROGUE ONE



"Rebel scum," pants Vader. "Did your Sith face hit the f****g fan, rubber freak?" says Felicity Jones. J.J.'s good family-friendly work unravels...

WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES

"Ooh ooh ooh," says Caesar, before translating to camera (involves eye-wateringly suggestive banana gestures). Suddenly, no-one takes talking apes seriously any more. **KH**

The Spotlight



Picture this: Tom Sturridge's unnamed protagonist sketches out a memory.

Total recall

REMAINDER | Memory is mutable in the British answer to Memento and Synecdoche, New York...

Masked men pile into a bank and *boom*, a shotgun blasts to get everyone's attention. We're on the East London set of *Remainder*, the feature debut of celebrated video artist Omer Fast, who's now marshalling his actors for a second take. Boom. And a third. Boom. And a fourth, fifth and sixth. Boom, boom, boom.

Anyone who's read Tom McCarthy's 2005 same-titled novel will appreciate the irony at play here. McCarthy's book tells of an unnamed man (played in the film by Tom Sturridge) who awakens from an accident with his memory damaged and £8.5m in compensation. He spends this money recreating the few scraps of memory he possesses in an effort to stop experiencing the world "second-hand" and to instead inhabit it "authentically". Actors are hired and scenes from his past life are re-enacted again and again and again.

Sounds familiar, right? Sounds a lot like *Synecdoche, New York*.

"I don't know, the lines between influence and reference, and tribute and plagiarism, are porous, right?" says McCarthy, a modest response given his book received raves three years before Charlie Kaufman's film hit cinemas.

Fast wanders over to discuss thorny themes. "This character has returned to a world that he doesn't completely grasp or recognise, so in the most fundamental way he has to reshape, or recreate, his position within it," he explains.

Events escalate until the protagonist orchestrates a bank robbery, for *Remainder* is not just a brainteaser but a terrific thriller. So does Fast appreciate the extra layer now at work – that's he's directing a film about someone who is essentially directing his own life?

> ***'The lines between influence and reference are porous'***

"Yeah, that had a huge appeal for me," he laughs. "The character, unwittingly, becomes an artist. Some of his statements are unclear and the performers don't always know what to make of his direction, so I definitely sympathise!" **JG**

ETA | JUNE *Remainder* opens in two months.

Tom Sturridge

Prodding the brain of *Remainder*'s star...

You're a long-time fan of the book, right?
I read it before it was published – my agency sent me a proof copy – and I loved it. The idea that 'self' can be mutable... a traumatic event can cause it to disappear.

Did Omer bring a fresh approach to directing?
Completely. The first two days we were shooting traditionally. You could see this tension in his body. On day three, all of the furniture in my character's flat – and I mean everything, from the sofa to the teaspoons – was piled up into a column in the central hallway. He said, "OK, we're going to shoot the rest of the stuff with it looking like this."

Did you see a parallel between your character's actions and that of a film director?
I saw parallels between the character and Omer, to the point that I almost started taking on his mannerisms because I think he was completely connected to it.

Your career seems to be taking off...
My aspiration is to work with unique directors, and I think I am achieving that. I've done Walter Salles [On The Road], Terrence Malick [Weightless], Omer Fast, Thomas Vinterberg [Far From The Madding Crowd]. Anything else is irrelevant to me. **JG**

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Crown Jewel

It's official: having remade every movie ever, Hollywood is now moving on to remakes of remakes. Up first: *The Thomas Crown Affair*, which has enlisted *Creed* star Michael B. Jordan as the next Steve McQueen/Pierce Brosnan. The 1968 original cast McQueen as a playboy bank robber engaged in the sexiest game of cat and mouse ever with Faye Dunaway's insurance investigator. There's currently no director or writer attached, but with *Creed* an unqualified success Jordan's casting is the steal of the century. **JF**

ETA | TBC ***The Thomas Crown Affair*** **is currently in pre-production.**

Plain talking

Learn the movie lingo

This month:

Dogme 95

Danish directors Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg launched this manifesto in 1995 with the intention of putting the focus back on story and performance. Ten rules were drawn up, mandating handheld cameras, natural light, location shooting and more. In all, 35 Dogme films were produced including *Festen*, *The Idiots* and *Open Hearts*.

ILLUSTRATION: GLEN BROGAN; PICTURE CREDIT: PA



Career injection

FANTASTIC FOUR | How do you fix the Fantastic Four? You could start by reading the comics...

"We're analysing what happened to you," said Franklin Storm. "Whatever it is, we can find a way to reverse it." If the folks at 20th Century Fox are engaged in similar analyses of the Fantastic Four right now – and you can bet your bottom line they are, whether in order to keep the rights from Marvel Studios or not – here are some directions: reverse to the source.

The truth about 2015's super-flop remains murky. Did Fox's 'fixes' clobber it senseless? Did Josh Trank lack the bridging film (after *Chronicle*'s promise) needed in his career to prepare him for directing something this super-sized? Either way, the result was an imperfect storm of chafing parts. And the chafing began at a molecular level: despite strong casting, this was a film at odds with its material.

The point sticks because if there's one wrong assumption people make after four failed *F4* films, it's that the comics are unfilmable. If there's another, it's that the comics need changing. Trank's 'body horror' twist on *Four*-mula seemed fine on paper; in practice, it played like poleaxed potential.

Despite dated politics, Kirby/Lee's '60s fab *Four* comics buzz with exploratory wonder, alt-family fireworks and mad science. The Four weren't called the Imaginauts without reason, so how come Fox's rethink showed less imagination than the Octonauts? While the comics ventured from microverses to Atlantis and beyond, Trank's film stretched from murky labs to lava-streaked rock faces and... stopped. It could have made *Guardians Of The Galaxy* look bore-some; instead, it made Fox look like guardians of the budget.

Likewise, Trank's film seemed determined to rein in the comics' fizzing character sparks. The 'First Family' set the standard for Marvel's soap opera-ish – in a good way – storytelling but Miles Teller's awkward fist bump was the closest we got to a revealing touch on screen. Poor Sue was frozen out altogether, hidden under headphones.

Failure will plunge the Four into deep freeze for now: but when they re-emerge, warm love for the source is vital. And the best carers would surely be Marvel Studios, whose way with emotionally focused alt-family dramedy and freaky sci-fi lit up *Guardians*. A Marvel-patented stealth return could work, slow-built on teasing cameos. Alternatively, Team Feige could try what worked with the once-botched *Daredevil* and hit TV: revel in the soap, don't resist it. Either way, makeovers are reversible. You just fix what's broken, not what isn't. **KH**

FIVE POINT FIX...

1. Bring the family home: to Marvel for a caring return under light-handed direction. Brad Bird?
2. Start with the flame ON. Anyone not origin'd out? Use flashbacks if – only if – necessary.
3. Walk a tonal high-wire. Embrace grounding emotion and the totally ungrounded stuff: trippy spectacle, epic kitsch.
4. Different villains. Try Namor (Rights issues? Fix 'em!) and Reed-gone-wrong Mr Fantastic for emotional stakes.
5. Go somewhere wild and wondrous, not Planet Zero-interest. Hence Namor the Sub-Mariner: Atlantis, here we come!



The Hero

Gabriel Byrne

The Hollywood star who's enjoyed the luck of the Irish...

A former trainee priest who briefly worked as a teacher, archaeologist and bullfighter, Gabriel Byrne didn't begin acting until he was 29. But the 65-year-old Dubliner has made up for lost time with films like *Miller's Crossing*, *The Usual Suspects* and *Spider*. His latest sees him take the lead as a grieving husband in *Louder Than Bombs*.

Had you seen the earlier films of Joachim Trier before you took on *Louder Than Bombs*?
Yeah, I'd seen both of them, *Reprise* and *Oslo, August 31st*. I had no idea I was going to work with him but I realised from those films that he was a unique voice. A movie is the product of choices rejected and I understood all the possibilities that he had at his disposal. What he ended up with was a very singular vision.

In the film, your character's wife is a war photographer who finds it difficult to return home. As an actor, do you recognise that?
When you go away from home for work, it's always difficult. You miss who is at home. And you're away in a hotel room by yourself. Sometimes that can mean freedom to be away, but a lifetime of that... I hear people say, "I wasn't there for the first time they walked" or "I wasn't there for the school concert". You pay a price for the job.

You did a number of jobs before you got into acting. So how did it come about?
I didn't have any career plan in mind. I went into acting at nighttime because I didn't want to spend my free time in pubs, which was the only place people seemed to congregate.

How did you make it to Hollywood?
I followed a woman to America, that's why I went there. She said to me, "They're auditioning for this movie." I went and auditioned for it, and it was *Miller's Crossing*.

Did you ever get close to working with the Coen Brothers again?
No. Somebody was talking that they were going to do a follow-up to *Miller's Crossing*, where now I would be in Albert Finney's role, but I don't know what happened. Might be an interesting film. Might not. I don't know.

You've produced as well – notably *In The Name Of The Father*. How did that come about?
I found that book at an airport in a wire basket that said 30 per cent off. It was old and forgotten!

What films of yours do you consider were big studio movies?
The Man In The Iron Mask was a big budget film, so was *Stigmata* and *End Of Days*. When I was living there, I did my clutch of Hollywood films. I got to live in Hollywood and got to be a Hollywood actor, I suppose. I didn't not enjoy Los Angeles – it's a nice place to live. But there was a pressure there. All of those films went to number one – and with that is also the pressure of saying, 'It's got to make $100 million' and I didn't like that kind of pressure. So I went back to making films with directors I felt were cutting edge.

One of those was David Cronenberg's *Spider*. How was that to make?
We were doing that picture the day September 11th happened. Myself and Ralph Fiennes came into the studio, and we were looking at this thing on TV, and we thought it was a commercial for a movie. Cronenberg immediately said, "The only way we can deal with this is get straight back to work."

Was HBO's *In Treatment* a big thing for you? You won a Golden Globe for it...
Yeah, it was and it wasn't. I don't think of it in terms of a 'big thing'. You do the work, you go on stage, you do an independent film... Every actor is up down, up down. **JM**

Hot Byrne: (top to bottom) in *Miller's Crossing*, *Spider*, and dealing with grief in *Louder Than Bombs*.



'I went back to making films with directors I felt were cutting edge'

ETA | 22 APRIL *Louder Than Bombs* opens this month.

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Sound bites

Quotable dialogue from this month's movies – and their stars...



"I was accused of giving the plot away, but I just think get a fucking life. It's only tits and dragons."
Ian McShane is not afraid to spoil *Game Of Thrones*.



"I know we're not perfect, but the safest hands are still our own."
Steve Rogers (**Chris Evans**) makes the case for Team Cap in *Captain America: Civil War*.

"I'm very aware of the physicality of the job. I would not take it lightly."
Tom Hiddleston is getting fighting fit for Bond.



"Everybody needs to shake up their life now and then. Maybe I went too far."
Kim (**Tina Fey**) makes a questionable life choice in *Whiskey Tango Foxtrot*.



"Men have forgotten what it means to be afraid."
Freya (**Emily Blunt**) is putting fear into the hearts of men in *The Huntsman: Winter's War*.



"*Ant-Man And The Wasp* is going FULL NC-17. Confirmed."
Peyton Reed is one-upping *Deadpool*.

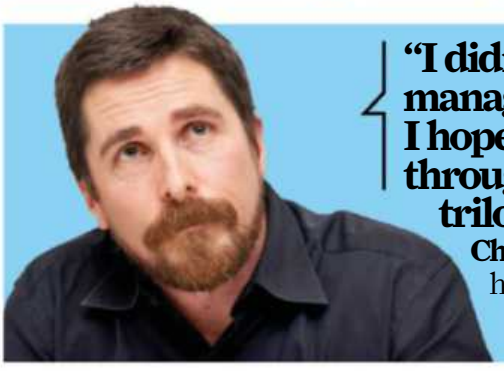


"The Old Man Logan story – that's appealing. That's something I can do. Old being the operative word."
Could **Liev Schreiber** return for *The Wolverine 3*?





"Because [*Chewbacca*] was right there, passed by Leia, it felt almost like a slight, which was definitely not the intention."
J.J. Abrams tries to justify snubbing Chewie.



"I didn't quite manage what I hoped I would through the trilogy."
Christian Bale has a bad case of the Bat-blues.

"This is one situation where it would be nice if Hollywood let it remain Brandon Lee's legacy."
Alex Proyas isn't keen on *The Crow* remake.



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★★★★★ OUTSTANDING ★★★★ VERY GOOD ★★★ GOOD ★★ DISAPPOINTING ★ RUBBISH



FILM OF THE MONTH

'Winner of the Best Foreign Film Oscar, *Son Of Saul* is a harrowing debut'

NEW RELEASES 08.04.16 - 06.05.16

OUT NOW

Anguish	★★★★	p56
Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice	★★★	p44
The Divergent Series: Allegiant	★★	p57
Kicking Off	★★★	p56
London Has Fallen	★★	p56
Martyrs	★★	p55
Mojave	★★★	p56
Motley's Law	★★★★	p53
My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2	★★	p57
Pandorica	★★	p53
10 Cloverfield Lane	★★★★	p50
A Warrior's Tail	★★★	p55

8 APRIL

The Absent One	★★★	p57
Calamity Jane	★★★★	p55
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The Last Man On The Moon	★★★★	p52
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15 APRIL

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6 MAY

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I Saw The Light	★★	p49
Johnny Guitar	★★★★	p56
Knight Of Cups	★★★	p47

ALSO RELEASED

We couldn't see them in time for this issue, so head to gamesradar.com/totalfilm for reviews of the following:

TITLE	RELEASE DATE
Captain America: Civil War	29 April
Criminal	15 April
Friend Request	22 April
The Grump	21 April
Hardcore Henry	8 April
The Huntsman: Winter's War	8 April
The Jungle Book	15 April
The Sweeney: Paris	15 April

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Jesse Eisenberg oozes potential as Lex Luthor Jr. in *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice*, p44



Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice

★★★☆☆ Out now

The capes of wrath...

THIS YEAR, TWO heavyweight pop-culture titans are going head to head. Yep, Marvel and DC are both releasing sequels featuring a clash of their own superpowered good guys. Captain America and Iron Man have at least bickered on screen before, but *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice* marks the first time that these title characters (arguably the most famous in comics) have shared space in a live-action film. This creates the instant aura of a must-see, regardless of what you thought of *Man Of Steel*, director Zack Snyder's first Superman film and the starting point for Warner Bros' expanded Justice League-centric universe.

Structurally similar to its predecessor, *BVS:DOJ* takes its time establishing its reality-grounded sci-fi setting ahead of the main-attraction dust-up. If the title clash ultimately disappoints, the world-building that leads to it has plenty to offer. In the black (or very, very dark grey) corner is Ben Affleck's grizzled Caped Crusader, a vigilante grown weary of the thankless, Sisyphean task of trying to clean up Gotham's underworld. In the red-and-blue corner, Kal-El/Clark Kent (Henry Cavill) is holding down a job at the *Daily Planet* (tasked with covering sports when he'd rather be writing an expose on the Bat), while global opinion is divided on his alter ego, Superman: do his heroic deeds justify the collateral damage he causes?

In the second prologue, after the obligatory recap of Bruce Wayne's tragic childhood, a Wayne Financial building (containing several storeys of employees) is destroyed during Superman's previous climactic battle with General Zod, an event replayed at ground-level in a thrilling new perspective on the destruction. From the wreckage, Bruce makes it his mission to prevent the extraterrestrial émigré from causing any more damage, by neutralising the threat.

Bat-fleck begins

Jumping ahead 18 months, Snyder continues the story at pace, with Lois Lane (Amy Adams, given more to do than you might expect) chasing a story in Africa, while Lex Luthor Jr. (Jesse Eisenberg) has a particular

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Try as he might, he couldn't get Bat's eyes tuned to Channel 5.

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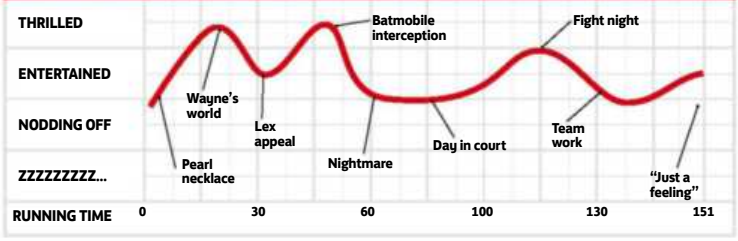
THE DARK KNIGHT TRILOGY
2005-12
Christopher Nolan's superior Bat-series set the standard for gritty, grounded superheroes.

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE
2012
Marvel's crossover event has inspired a wave of attempts at similar expanded universes.

GODZILLA
2014
Gareth Edwards' straight-faced treatment of a rampaging, city-levelling beast resulted in a monster hit.

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interest in the Kryptonian vessels lying dormant in various crash sites worldwide. Meanwhile, the enigmatic Diana Prince (Gal Gadot) begins turning up at all the fancy soirées that Bruce finds himself snooping around. Jeremy Irons and Holly Hunter are strong additions to a cast already teeming with gravitas.

Christopher Nolan's Batman films aren't part of this canon, but that doesn't mean their influence is not keenly felt (Nolan and Emma Thomas again exec produce here). Largely sticking with the grounded approach that made the *Dark Knight* trilogy so compelling, this isn't a radical new interpretation of the Caped Crusader, so it's a credit to Affleck – and the enduring popularity of the character – that it doesn't feel too soon to have him on screen again. Aided by Snyder's visual verve, its an extremely faithful take on the character, and, alone, he's responsible for many of the film's best moments: from taking on a roomful of goons in a hand-to-hand scrap, to an explosive Batmobile chase.

In fact, what's perhaps most surprising is that *BVS* is at its best when its heroes are

'Some spectacular clobberings are dispensed'

apart. When it comes to the clash itself, there's an inescapable feeling of anti-climax. Not only does the animosity between the pair never feel fully earned, but the eventual bout doesn't quite justify the pre-release hype, or make the most of its historical significance. Goosebumps are inevitable when the two icons finally face off, and there are some spectacular clobberings dispensed, but it doesn't feel like, as Lex pitches it, "the greatest gladiator battle in the history of the world". And if it sounds like Batman's vengeance mission is in part to atone for the criticism towards *Man Of Steel*'s destruction-porn finale, it's not; *BVS* ends with a similarly numbing CG overload.

Gal force

As in *Iron Man 2*, there's a sense that *Dawn Of Justice* (as that subtitle implies) is a bridging device, a platform to launch a bigger cinematic universe, and as such it might work better when viewed as part of a 10-film collection than it does as a standalone. Even if it is at the cost of its central conflict, *BVS* does work as a promo for films yet to come: there's no one who won't want to get to know Gadot's kick-ass Wonder Woman better after the credits roll, while Eisenberg's conceited Lexcorp heir is riddled with daddy issues, and feels ripe for further exploration.

So while B*atman V Superman* has no trouble quickening the pulse, it's less effective when it comes to making you care. There's plenty to gawp at and Hans Zimmer and Junkie XL's score electrifies, but the emotional punches never really connect, and the gritty realism occasionally draws attention to some forehead-slapping plotholes (even in the face of giant coincidences, no one twigs Clark's secret identity). It won't win over staunch *Man Of Steel* haters, but for anyone giddy at the prospect of seeing DC's flagship stars together at last, big-screen viewing is pretty much mandatory. **Matt Maytum**

THE VERDICT **Ben Affleck's Dark Knight and Gal Gadot's Wonder Woman make welcome additions to the newly forged DC Universe, even if the title fight doesn't quite do justice to its comics heritage.**

› **Certificate** 12A **Director** Zack Snyder **Starring** Ben Affleck, Henry Cavill, Gal Gadot, Amy Adams, Jesse Eisenberg, Laurence Fishburne, Diane Lane, Jeremy Irons **Screenplay** David S. Goyer, Chris Terrio **Distributor** Warner Bros **Running time** 151 mins


"I'm keeping the camo jumpsuit."

Eye In The Sky

★★★★☆ Out 15 April Game of drones...

DRONE WARFARE HAS NEVER quite felt so real or as nerve-shredding as it does in Gavin Hood's excellent drama. True, it's a topic that's been explored recently – but while Andrew Niccol's *Good Kill* concentrated on one man's redemption, *Eye In The Sky* takes a more complex look at modern warfare.

Set across four continents, it plays out in boardrooms as much as battlegrounds. Leading the line is Colonel Katherine Powell (a no-nonsense Helen Mirren), who's overseeing an operation to bring in a radicalised English woman, Susan Helen Danford (Lex King), who's joined up with Al-Shabaab terrorists.

Scripted by Guy Hibbert with both intelligence and patience, the story avoids any sort of Michael Bay-hem. Rather, it cuts back and forth as various politicians pass the buck when it comes to making the decision to bomb the safe house where Danford and others are currently holed up. In London, we meet Lt. General Frank Benson (Alan Rickman), who agrees an attack must take place but is left frustrated as decision-makers "refer up" the chain of command.

Meanwhile, in Las Vegas, pilot Steve Watts (Aaron Paul) is responsible for flying the drone, but faced with a very real moral dilemma in his crosshairs, one that gives the narrative a potent tick-tock tension. Hood, who has toyed with political subtext in movies from *Tsotsi* to *Ender's Game*, here crafts a film that raises huge moral questions about the validity of drone warfare. Factor in Mirren and Rickman, in one of his final roles, and you have a highly impactful drama. **James Mottram**

THE VERDICT **Tense and thought-provoking in equal measure, this is first-rate – a modern-day *Dr. Strangelove* played out on video screens.**

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Gavin Hood **Starring** Helen Mirren, Alan Rickman, Aaron Paul, Lex King, Jeremy Northam **Screenplay** Guy Hibbert **Distributor** Entertainment One **Running time** 102 mins

Whiskey Tango Foxtrot

★★★☆☆ Out 22 April Wartime Tina feature...

MAKING A FUNNY FILM ABOUT the war in Afghanistan is tricky. Headlining it with two female stars – and successfully passing the Bechdel Test – is even trickier. So you have to wonder WTF anyone was thinking when they cast white actors in the two key Afghan roles.

Based on Kim Barker's *The Taliban Shuffle: Strange Days In Afghanistan And Pakistan*, *Whiskey* sees Kim *Baker* (Fey), a disgruntled copywriter on a mid-tier news network, plonked in Kabul in the hopes of raising ratings with frontline footage. The inexperienced Baker is taken under various wings at the cruddy journalist digs: her stoic Afghan fixer, Fahim (Christopher Abbott) who protects her from ridicule and the Taliban with equal aplomb; rival reporter Tanya Vanderpoel (Margot Robbie), who shows her the professional and sexual ropes of this screwed-up new world; and Hollanek (Billy Bob Thornton), a sardonic general who gives Baker tough love. Throw in a cartoony Afghan official (Alfred Molina) plus Martin Freeman doing Scottish as a rumpled war photographer and Baker's new life transforms from cock-ups (like losing cash in an Afghan wind) to a new normal and a hunger to get the next big story.

To the credit of a hugely appealing Fey, Baker is a (mostly) gender-neutral hero rather than mere chick-flick protagonist, by turns spiky and sweet. But much goodwill is blasted by Molina's oleaginous turn and Abbott's spot-on but bemusing performance. Which is a shame as this *Private Benjamin*-in-the-Middle-East has the potential to be that rare beast, a feminist crowdpleaser. **Jane Crowther**

THE VERDICT **Entertaining but problematic, *WTF* almost hits the target but is scuppered by friendly fire.**

› **Certificate** TBC **Directors** John Requa, Glenn Ficarra **Starring** Tina Fey, Margot Robbie, Martin Freeman, Billy Bob Thornton, Alfred Molina **Screenplay** Robert Carlock **Distributor** Paramount **Running time** 122 mins


She was sure she'd blend right in.

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He was beginning to regret that last slammer.

Knight Of Cups

★★★☆☆ Out 6 May

Malick's not-so-magic hour...

AWAITING THE NEW TERRENCE Malick film used to be like contemplating the blank sky for the arrival of a dazzling comet. The first 38 years of his career gave us five films, all of them masterpieces or thereabouts, and the stretches of silence – 20 years between *Days Of Heaven* and *The Thin Red Line* – only added to the experience. Not anymore. Malick's new movie, *Knight Of Cups*, is his third in five years, with two more already in the can. Shot through with beauty and awe, it confirms, after *To The Wonder*, that this extraordinary filmmaker's current work is more intimate and reflective than ever. Unfortunately it's also hollow, simplistic (especially in its portrayal of women) and open to charges of self-plagiarism.

The plot, such as it is, sees Christian Bale's Hollywood screenwriter, Rick, undergoing a spiritual crisis. Flitting between Los Angeles and Las Vegas, he's forever trailed by beautiful women (Natalie Portman, Teresa Palmer, Imogen Poots, Freida Pinto and, playing Rick's ex-wife, Cate Blanchett) as he stares at architecture, wades into the sea and ambles in the desert. Occasionally Rick's overbearing father (Brian Dennehy) and younger brother (Wes Bentley) drift into view, their incessant arguing at one point muted as Malick allows forlorn classical music to swell on the soundtrack by way of comment.

Man discombobulated and disconnected – from the natural world, from God (this is Malick's most overtly Christian film) – is again the theme, and Emmanuel Lubezki's gorgeous floaty-cam once more captures pirouetting women, a child on a swing and other now-clichés, while fragments of voiceover add murmur to the shimmer. This is Malick turning graceful, ever-decreasing circles, though there's a thrill to seeing him traverse hotel rooms and studio lots, nightclubs and strip clubs, after a career wrapped up in the period and pastoral. **Jamie Graham**

THE VERDICT Idle impressionism, or a great artist doodling. Like protagonist Rick, Malick feels in need of reinvention – a return to the narrative cinema of *Badlands*, perhaps?

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Terrence Malick **Starring** Christian Bale, Cate Blanchett, Natalie Portman, Brian Dennehy, Wes Bentley **Screenplay** Terrence Malick **Distributor** Studiocanal **Running time** 118 mins



RATCHET AND CLANK

★★☆☆☆ Out 29 April

VIDEOGAME ODD COUPLE RATCHET and Clank have headlined over a dozen galactic adventures since 2002. This feature-length CG 'toon resets and remixes the story to date, explaining how the pair first teamed up to take down Chairman Drek and his mechanical army. It's extremely faithful to the well-received games, with the main voice actors reprising their roles alongside a surprisingly starry supporting cast (Paul Giamatti, Rosario Dawson, Sly Stallone). But the humour hasn't translated well and the cheapo music seems to have been ripped straight from a PS2 disc. **Jordan Farley**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 94 mins



OUR LITTLE SISTER

★★★☆☆ Out 15 April

THERE'S ENDLESS CHARM BUT LESS chewiness than you might expect in this sweet if episodic manga adap from the director of *Nobody Knows* (Hirokazu Koreeda). A femme-filled family melodrama, it introduces tween half-sister Suzu (Suzu Hirose) into the seaside home of three sisters after their father's funeral. Filled with cherry-blossom gorgeousness and sentimental homages to small-town Japanese life, it's a film of quiet, telling moments, even when big revelations surface. Big sister Sachi (Haruka Ayase) stands out, but otherwise the film's sheer delicacy keeps us at a distance. **Kate Stables**

› **Certificate** PG **Running time** 127 mins



HARD TIDE

★★★★☆ Out 29 April

AN UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP FORGED between a small-town thug and a nine-year-old girl forms the basis of this hard-bitten drama with a heart. Nathaniel Wiseman stars (and co-directs) as Jake, a young man embroiled in a gang, who takes Jade (Alexandra Newick) under his wing following a tragic accident. The criminal-with-compassion storyline has enough lightness to lend the film some humour, and the performances are charming, but this is no less effective as a violent, gritty crimer than it is as a sweet tale of friendship and redemption. **Matt Looker**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 79 mins



DESERT DANCER

★★★☆☆ Out 22 April

THE IRANIAN BILLY ELLIOT? THE Middle-Eastern *Dirty Dancing*? Judging by the number of 'inspirational' dance montages here, either of those could be the pitch for Richard Raymond's drama, based on the life of Afshin Ghaffarian. Set primarily in 2009, 30 years since dance was banned after the Iranian Revolution, it sees Afshin (Reece Ritchie) gather a group of students to bust some moves in the desert. With robotic depictions of Iran's 'morality police', the political subtext is strictly one-dimensional. But with ace choreographer Akram Khan on board, the dancing is powerful. **James Mottram**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 103mins



Bullets, yup. Gloves, yup. Soap? Nope.

Jane Got A Gun

★★★☆☆ Out 22 April

A Portman's gotta do...

IT'S HARD TO REVIEW JANE GOT A GUN for what it is rather than what might have been – during a production resembling a high-noon shootout, director Lynne Ramsay (*We Need To Talk About Kevin*) and stars such as Michael Fassbender and Jude Law all ran for the hills. Kudos, then, to producer/star Natalie Portman and director Gavin O'Connor (*Pride And Glory*, *Warrior*) for keeping their sights steady and delivering a handsome post-Civil War western that's enamoured of genre traditions even as it offers a revisionist riff.

1871. Riddled with lead, Bill (Noah Emmerich), husband of Jane (Portman), returns to their homestead in New Mexico warning that John Bishop (Ewan McGregor, all but twirling his moustache) and his gang are in pursuit. Jane, whose sharp features and ramrod posture – to say nothing of her skills with a shotgun – mark her as a capable woman in this most male of genres, promptly rides their young daughter to safety and then corrals hard-drinking ex-soldier Dan (Joel Edgerton) into aiding her preparations for the outlaws' imminent arrival.

Any problems are structural, with the narrative's otherwise confident canter towards an intriguingly handled siege finale too frequently halted by flashbacks. Events of the past 10 years have been tricksy, it transpires, with Jane, Bill, Dan and Bishop inextricably partnered in a dance of death. But while these windows into the past allow for honey-hued romantic interludes (a ride in a hot-air balloon!) and psychological traumas that are openly discussed – both things uncommon in a genre that trades on being tough and taciturn – you can't help wishing the backstories were a little leaner and cleaner.

Still, the arid landscapes are handsomely shot, the set-pieces punchy and intimate, and the performances robust, with Portman reminding us just how good an actress she is as her no-nonsense Jane gets on with the business of survival. Portman the producer, it seems, did exactly the same.
Jamie Graham

THE VERDICT Dusting itself off from a nightmare production, this western finally arrives to shoot, for the most part, straight and true. It certainly ain't no calamity *Jane*.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Gavin O'Connor **Staring** Natalie Portman, Joel Edgerton, Ewan McGregor, Noah Emmerich, Boyd Holbrook **Screenplay** Brian Duffield, Anthony Tambakis, Joel Edgerton **Distributor** Lionsgate **Running time** 98 mins

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

JOHNNY GUITAR
1954
Joan Crawford stands tall in a delirious western that puts women before men (see p56).

FORTY GUNS
1957
Ruler of the titular posse, Barbara Stanwyck blazes in Samuel Fuller's flinty western.

MEEK'S CUTOFF
2010
Kelly Reichardt's feminist western is spare and unsparingly brutal as three families go west.

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EISENSTEIN IN GUANAJUATO

★★★★☆ Out 15 April

SEX AND DEATH – TWO PETER Greenaway perennials – get an airing in this return to form for the veteran British director. Focusing on Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein, the 'granddaddy' of montage who brought us *Battleship Potemkin*, this is no dry treatise about film theory. Rather, it tells of "10 days that shook" Eisenstein, as he heads to Mexico and loses his anal virginity at 33. Our hero is played with utter commitment by Finnish actor Elmer Bäck, giving a delightfully unfettered performance that matches Greenaway's gusto for his subject. Beautiful and bold, rebellious and riotous, its sexual frankness puts E.L. James in the shade. **James Mottram**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 106 mins



THE MAN WHO KNEW INFINITY

★★★☆☆ Out 8 April

THE BEAUTIFUL MIND IN THIS BIOPIC of a troubled mathematical genius belongs to one Srinivasa Ramanujan (Dev Patel), a clerk from Madras whose facility with figures earns him a place at Cambridge. There he receives tutelage from Jeremy Irons' pipe-puffing professor and racist contempt from everybody else, putting strain on his constitution as he formulates a theory for divining prime numbers. An intriguing story told in generic fashion, *Infinity* gets good value from Irons and a dignified swansong from the late Richard Johnson. By the close, alas, we're no closer to understanding Ramanujan's brilliance than we are at the beginning. **Neil Smith**

› **Certificate** 12A **Running time** 109 mins

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The brief period where Miles forgot how to orient a trumpet is sensitively covered.

Miles Ahead

★★★☆☆ Out 22 April Trumpet project...

THE CRADLE-TO-THE-GRAVE biopic has become an increasingly tired Hollywood staple. So it's somewhat refreshing to see Don Cheadle make his directorial debut with what might be called an anti-bio – one that gives the much-deserved big-screen treatment to jazz legend Miles Davis. It's tempting to think this musical innovator would approve of the offbeat, semi-fictional approach taken in this account of a few days in his 'lost' years – the mid-'70s period when he disappeared from public view.

Eschewing the usual mentors-and-montages structure, the film finds Cheadle's Davis in a creative funk, although there are frequent, feverish flashbacks to his earlier days, as he laments his time with first wife Frances Taylor (Emayatzy Corinealdi). Into his world comes Ewan McGregor's Dave Braden – a shaggy-haired reporter who claims to be working on a 'comeback' story for *Rolling Stone* but, like Michael Stuhlbarg's oily producer, wants to get his hands on secret 'session' tapes stashed in Davis' apartment.

With his colossal drug habit, Davis is hardly the most likeable protagonist – and purists will doubtless balk at this revisionist history, which skips his rise to fame in favour of coke deals, shoot-outs and car chases.

Still, a frizzy-afro'd Cheadle works hard to summon Davis' spirit, even if the script (by Cheadle and Steven Baigelman, who earned a story credit on James Brown biopic *Get On Up*) never quite captures the artist's multi-faceted achievements in the way Todd Haynes managed with Bob Dylan bio *I'm Not There*. The narrative feels too scattershot to be successful, although slick editing gives the film some transcendent moments. Cheadle, as you might expect, roars on screen. And off it? He has a vision – and he pursues it relentlessly. **James Mottram**

THE VERDICT Meandering like a jazz riff, *Miles Ahead* is a curio that doesn't quite come off. But credit Cheadle, both in front and behind camera, for refusing to play the easy notes.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Don Cheadle **Starring** Don Cheadle, Ewan McGregor, Emayatzy Corinealdi, Michael Stuhlbarg **Screenplay** Steven Baigelman, Don Cheadle **Distributor** Icon **Running time** 100 mins

I Saw The Light

★★☆☆☆ Out 6 May Hidds and miss...

ONE OF THE BIGGEST ICONS OF country music, Hank Williams is considered a national treasure anywhere they still whistle folksy classics like 'Lovesick Blues', 'Hey, Good Lookin'' and 'I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry'. Unsurprisingly, Hank's fans (and relatives) weren't too happy to hear that the Westminster-born, Eton-educated Tom Hiddleston would be playing him in Marc Abraham's long-gestating biopic.

Employing a thick gravy'n'biscuits accent that only occasionally slips into RP, Hidds doesn't sound *too* far from Alabama – and, of course, it doesn't really matter whether or not he can sing like Hank because nobody can sing like Hank, which is sort of the whole point. What matters more is that the film isn't very good. Less a biopic than a dramatised Wikipedia page, every fact, plot point and character beat is played directly on the nose, with Hank going from poor drunken asshole to rich drunken asshole in the least eventful way possible.

Bracketed by a clumsy framing device that sees Bradley Whitford pretending he's in a documentary, *ISTL* begins with Hank's marriage to honky-tonk queen Audrey Sheppard (Elizabeth Olsen) and follows him through his rocky rise to post-war fame as 'The Hillbilly Shakespeare'. Wives come and go, gigs are played, hits are made, drinks are drunk... And all of this plods along without any of the deft storytelling of Hank's own songs.

When Abraham leaves the camera on Hiddleston and Olsen long enough to let them chew on their characters, the film offers flashes of something much more interesting: a handful of domestic scenes prove that the actors, not to mention Hank, would've been much better served by a ballsier script and braver direction. **Paul Bradshaw**

THE VERDICT Poor Tom Hiddleston – he spent months perfecting his southern accent for a biopic that lets him down almost as much as it does Hank Williams.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Marc Abraham **Starring** Tom Hiddleston, Elizabeth Olsen, David Krumholtz, Bradley Whitford, Cherry Jones **Screenplay** Marc Abraham **Distributor** Sony **Running time** 124 mins


Hank's hat, ironically, prevented him from seeing the light.



10 Cloverfield Lane

★★★★☆ Out now

J.J. goes down the rabbit-hole...

IT MIGHT HAVE THE C-word in the title, J.J. Abrams producing and a monster in its midst, but this is not *Cloverfield 2*. Anyone expecting/desiring a sequel to Matt Reeves' 2008 monster mash will feel disappointed at best, cheated at worst, so let's make that thunderously clear from the off. Rather, *10 Cloverfield Lane* is, as Abrams puts it, a "spiritual successor" or "blood relative" set in the (shudder) "Cloververse" – a hint of overlap here, a pinch of DNA there. In fact, so faint are the echoes, not everyone will be convinced that debut director Dan Trachtenberg's suspense-thriller is anything more than a standalone effort. Originally entitled *Valencia*, it doesn't take a cynic to point out that slipping 'Cloverfield' into the title of this Bad Robot production can only boost box-office prospects.

What's not to be doubted is the effectiveness of this tense, claustrophobic three-hander. The setting is a remote farmhouse – the address of the title – 40 miles from Lake Charles in Louisiana, though the action is primarily confined to an underground bunker.

Our way in is Michelle (Mary Elizabeth Winstead), who we meet as she packs to flee a relationship. So forceful is the car crash that she's subsequently involved in that we, like her, are stunned when she awakens to find herself shackled and hooked to a drip in a bare, windowless room.

Biblical proportions

Michelle's captor is Howard (John Goodman), slovenly clothed, salt 'n' pepper beard, routinely flexing his hands as anger and paranoia surge through him. "There's been an attack, a big one... I'm not sure yet if it's chemical or nuclear," he informs Michelle, warning of a fallout that requires they stay underground for "one year, maybe two". Is he speaking the truth? The third player in this psychodrama, mellow, eager-to-please Emmet (*The Newsroom*'s John Gallagher Jr.), certainly thinks so. He supports Howard's theory, and offers

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The fly's incessant buzzing was beginning to get really irritating.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE 1944
Vaguely linked to the classic *Cat People*, this stunner laid the way for spiritual sequels.

DAY OF THE DEAD 1985
Still *the* people-trapped-in-a-bunker-while-the-world-goes-to-hell movie.

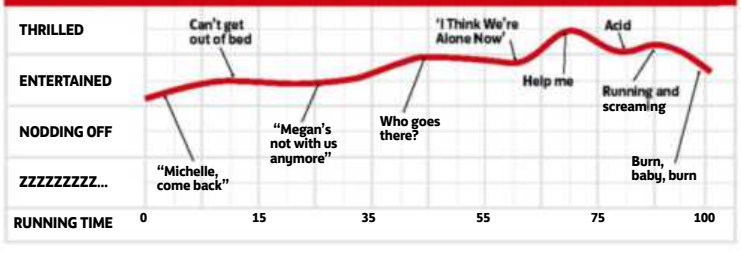
TAKE SHELTER 2011
Is the apocalypse coming or is it a nightmare in Michael Shannon's damaged brain?

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testimony of an appalling flash, "like something you read in the Bible".

If *Cloverfield* assaulted our eyes with seesawing, visceral, found-footage thrills, and our ears with the deafening roar of streaking jets and collapsing skyscrapers, *10 Cloverfield Lane* is all about pregnant stillness and screaming silence. Trachtenberg is far more traditional in his filmmaking and suspense techniques, right down to the stabbing strings of Bear McCreary's Bernard Herrmann-esque score. The presence of *Whiplash*'s Damien Chazelle among the screenwriting credits speaks volumes: Goodman's Howard is as terrifying as J.K. Simmons' Fletcher. He might not stop at verbal and psychological abuse, either – *10 Cloverfield Lane* burrows deep into horror territory, threatening, at times, to become *Martyrs* for the masses.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™



The atmosphere is one of ambiguity and distrust. At the top of the steps to a triple-locked door is a small window to the outside world, and through it can be spied two dead pigs, Frank and Mildred, their blood-blistered flesh seemingly lending credence to Howard's ranting about Russia, North Korea, al-Qaeda, and extraterrestrials. But then how do you explain the Doomsday books on his shelves, or the very existence of this bunker, with its air-filtration unit and tidy living space?

Cannibal run

All three characters are strongly played by a cast that was allowed to act out the drama chronologically courtesy of the single setting, and each has a backstory that further ratchets the tension. There is humour, too, with the trapped trio observing table manners, and adapting their rhythms until they cohabit with something like harmony – movies viewed include *Pretty In Pink* and *Cannibal Airlines*. (The latter is a made-up title but Frank Marshall's 1993 drama *Alive* is a close fit.)

Does the action ever unpick its padlocks and move above ground? And, if so, is there anything out there that more firmly locates Trachtenberg's movie in the 'Cloververse'? To answer that would be to do the script, with its incrementally tightening chokehold, a terrible disservice. Although it's fair to say that the suspicious, strong-minded and thoroughly resourceful Michelle has one eye forever on that outer door, the other on the keys swinging from Howard's hip. It's also fair to say that Winstead's unflashy, deep-dive performance elicits more emotional investment than any of *Cloverfield*'s comely cut-outs.

It'll be too slow-burn for some and others are sure to say it's a *Twilight Zone* episode stretched over 103 minutes (to which we say: "And?"), but *10 Cloverfield Lane* has enough suspense, shocks and scares to be a monster hit. Let's hope so – someone needs to give Trachtenberg a wad of cash to go shoot *Cannibal Airlines*.

Jamie Graham

> 'Enough suspense, shocks and scares to be a monster hit'

THE VERDICT ***Cloverfield* was all about making viewers gasp and pant; *10 Cloverfield Lane* demands you hold your breath. As unnerving as it is surprising.**

› **Certificate** 12A **Director** Dan Trachtenberg **Starring** Mary Elizabeth Winstead, John Goodman, John Gallagher Jr., Douglas M. Griffin, Suzanne Cryer **Screenplay** Josh Campbell, Damien Chazelle, Matthew Stuecken **Distributor** Paramount **Running time** 103 mins


"What time does the London Eye open?"

Arabian Nights

★★★★☆ Out 22 April/29April/6 May

Ripping yarns...

RELEASED OVER THREE consecutive weeks in separate volumes – *The Restless One, The Desolate One, The Enchanted One* – totalling nearly six-and-a-half hours, this ambitious trilogy by Portuguese filmmaker Miguel Gomes (*Tabu*) is no straight adaptation of the collected stories that comprise *One Thousand And One Nights*. Instead it borrows the conceit of Scheherazade (Crista Alfaiate) telling nightly tales to her kingly husband in an effort to stay alive, but bends those stories so that they might pass comment on a modern-day Portugal crippled by austerity measures.

If that all sounds a little high-minded and dry, it's saved from being so by an eclectic soundtrack, a palpable love of storytelling, deep humanism, righteous fury, bawdy humour and Gomes' startling ability to shuffle tones, genres and eras. Surely the first film to leap from the testimony of laid-off dockyard workers to tales bursting with genies, princes and outlaws, *Arabian Nights* veers from the naturalistic to the fantastical, from documentary to fiction.

Volumes one and two are especially captivating, as Gomes himself appears onscreen to tell of how he charged a team of researchers with scouring Portugal in search of tales. Philosophy and allegory are ripe: foreign wasps kill off the indigenous bee population; politicians drink a magical potion and develop rampant erections; and a cockerel on trial for crowing too early defends himself by saying people didn't want to be alerted in advance.

Volume 3 contains treasures too, though a faux-doc on singing chaffinches being trained for competition outstays its welcome. The great thing about *Arabian Nights* is that if one story isn't to your liking, another pops up, so the decision to give this tale a feature-length running time is perplexing. But quibbles aside, this is daring, magical filmmaking. **Jamie Graham**

THE VERDICT One of the princes of arthouse cinema, Miguel Gomes here uses his status to push form and stretch boundaries. Very long but very much worth it.

› **Certificate** TBA **Director** Miguel Gomes **Starring** Crista Alfaiate, Carloto Cotta, Maria Rueff, Luisa Cruz **Screenplay** Telmo Churro, Miguel Gomes, Mariana Ricardo **Distributor** New Wave Films **Running time** 125 mins (Vol.1); 131 mins (Vol.2); 125 mins (Vol.3)



THE LAST MAN ON THE MOON

★★★★☆ Out 8 April

ONLY 12 PEOPLE IN HISTORY HAVE ever set foot on the Moon. This excellent doc points its telescope at just one of them – Gene Cernan, the last NASAA astronaut to pull shut the Lunar Module door. Most of the story will be familiar to anyone with an interest in the Apollo programme, but what makes this special is the focus on one extremely charismatic man. Beyond the history, stunning archive footage and talking heads, the film gets deep into Cernan's mind to reveal the sacrifices the Apollo guys – and their families – made to ensure they had the right stuff. **Richard Edwards**

› **Certificate** PG **Running time** 96 mins



DESPITE THE FALLING SNOW

★★★☆☆ Out 15 April

AS WITH 2007'S THE WORLD UNSEEN, Shamim Sarif adapts/directs her own novel, a 2004-penned story of defection, betrayal and long-lost love. Set in 1959 Moscow, it stars Rebecca Ferguson as Katya, a spy who falls for U.S. official Alexander (Sam Reid) who she's been instructed to shadow. Less compelling, however, are the scenes four decades on with Charles Dance as Alexander and Ferguson playing his niece. The 'dual roles' conceit doesn't quite work, despite Ferguson's best efforts. But, while it struggles to find rhythm, you can't fault Sarif's ambitions. **James Mottram**

› **Certificate** 12A **Running time** 93mins



RICHARD III

★★★★★ Out 28 April

BACKED BY A STELLAR ENSEMBLE (Robert Downey Jr., Annette Bening, Maggie Smith), Ian McKellen takes the lead in Richard Loncraine's gory, blackly funny 1995 adap (re-released as part of BFI's Shakespeare On Film season). The action's relocated to a fascist '30s London – a conceit that works brilliantly, from the moment a WW1 tank smashes through the Prince of Wales' fireplace, with goons spraying machine-gun fire to a rasping Al Jolson soundtrack. With a screenplay (co-written by McKellen) that crackles and spits like a roasting pig, it was clearly as much of a blast to make as it is to watch. **Ali Catterall**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running Time** 104 mins



THE PASSING

★★★☆☆ Out 8 April

LIKE 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE PITCHED AT a whisper, TV director Gareth Bryn's rustic three-hander is a steady-handed exercise in slow-horror secrecy, distinguished by more than its Welsh-language script. Mark Lewis Jones gets its sparse measure as Stanley, a taciturn local who takes in a couple (Annes Elwy, Dyfan Dwyfor) when their car crashes near his house. As tension between them simmers, spooky touches and ambiguous asides suggest mysteries both spectral and corporeal. The twists are guessable, but Bryn makes seductive work of the route there, every candle-lit corridor and harrowed tree holding our gaze. **Kevin Harley**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 89 mins

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MOTLEY'S LAW

★★★★☆ Out now

"I CAME HERE FOR THE MONEY AND IT just became... something else." So explains Kimberley Motley, the first foreign lawyer to work in Afghanistan, who fights for justice in human-rights cases despite the dangers. Danish documentarian Nicole Nielsen Horanyi follows Motley between 2013 and 2014 as international troops are leaving the country, using confrontations with abuse and corruption in the Afghan legal system to ask questions about what the occupation achieved. But what draws focus most is Motley's unique story: an ex-beauty queen, she left her family in the US to pursue an obligation to help potential clients. **Matt Looker**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 85 mins



PANDORICA

★★☆☆☆ Out now

GIVEN THE OBVIOUS BUDGET constraints, writer/director Tom Paton manages to inject his feature debut with some visual sizzle. A pity, then, that the small cast and night-forest setting do little to sell the scale of this supposedly epic post-apocalyptic tale. It centres on three tribespeople locked in a leadership contest that involves heading to a remote neck of the woods to attempt a series of trials. A promising set-up and interesting twists of fate give way to more standard horror fare, as sulky heroine Eiren (Jade-Fenix Hobday) fends off a masked attacker. A case of smart ideas, so-so execution. **Matt Looker**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 82 mins



NASTY BABY

★★★★☆ Out 8 April

CHILEAN WRITER-DIRECTOR SEBASTIÁN Silva (*Magic Magic*) heads to Brooklyn for this sly little tale, in which he stars as Freddy, a gay man who decides to start a family with his best friend Polly (Kristen Wiig). With Freddy's juice not up to the job, a sperm donor is required – but that's just the start of their problems in an increasingly off-kilter story. Veering off in a totally unexpected direction, it features a key role played by *House Of Cards*' Reg E. Cathey as a local crazy... but to say more would ruin the pleasures this barbed comedy has to offer. **James Mottram**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 101 mins



THE BRAND NEW TESTAMENT

★★★★☆ Out 15 April

WHY DOES TOAST ALWAYS FALL JAM side down? Blame God, says Belgian fabulist Jaco Van Dormael (*Toto The Hero*), whose warm, cheeky, inventive satire proves Monty Python don't hold the patent on God-coms. With Benoît Poelvoorde's God imagined as a grouch, his daughter Ea (Pili Groyne) visits Earth to gather fresh apostles for a brighter Testament. As she unites all humanity, a winning mix of madcap wit, invention and open-armed warmth compensates for sketchy plotting. Even the devout, surely, will warm to Dormael's alt-gospel: one of compassion, oddball fish gags and cheerier skylines. **Kevin Harley**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 112 mins

Demolition

★★★★☆ Out 29 April

Jake Gyllenhaal smashes it...

WHAT FASCINATES CANADIAN director Jean-Marc Vallée, it seems, are individuals in crisis, people driven to desperate measures. In *Dallas Buyers Club* Matthew McConaughey's defiant AIDS victim (a role that netted him an Oscar) takes on the system to get himself and his fellow sufferers the drugs they're denied. Reese Witherspoon in *Wild* sets out to right her screwed-up life by solo-hiking the 1,000-plus miles of the Pacific Crest Trail. And now, in *Demolition*, he's got Jake Gyllenhaal as Davis Mitchell, an NYC investment banker who's cauterised his emotions to such a degree that, when his lovely wife dies in a brutal car crash, he finds himself incapable of grief. So he takes it out in, precisely, demolition – smashing up his life both socially and physically, starting with the fridge and ending up with his house.

In the hands of the wrong director or given a miscast lead actor, this storyline could have come across as ludicrously clumsy. But Vallée's nervy style and taut, disjunctive editing mesh perfectly with Gyllenhaal's clenched intensity to craft a film that's at once farcical and unexpectedly moving, the pair holding it together like a high-wire act. There's fine support, too, from Chris Cooper as Davis' tight-buttoned, resentful father-in-law, Naomi Watts as the fragile single mother who finds herself drawn into trying to console him, and newcomer Judah Lewis as her conflicted, sexually confused son with whom Davis forms an unlooked-for bond. But it's Gyllenhaal who drives the action, giving us a portrait of emotional dysfunction that's close kin to his coldly calculating crime reporter in *Nightcrawler*.

Vallée shadows his lead character's unleashed behaviour by deconstructing his movie, throwing in bizarre flash inserts (an animated talking frog briefly shows up a couple of times) and darting off on unexpected tangents. *Demolition* baffles, bemuses and misdirects on its way to finding itself, much as Davis does; but if you hang on in there, it's well worth the ride. **Philip Kemp**

THE VERDICT **An offbeat, disruptive treatment of grief, shot through with flashes of manic humour, and played to the hilt by Jake Gyllenhaal at the top of his game.**

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Jean-Marc Vallée **Starring** Jake Gyllenhaal, Naomi Watts, Chris Cooper, Polly Draper, Judah Lewis **Screenplay** Bryan Sipe **Distributor** 20th Century Fox **Running time** 101 mins




Géza Röhrig plays Sonderkomando Saul Ausländer.

Son Of Saul

★★★★★ Out 29 April

Matters of life and death...

OUT OF RESPECT FOR THE DEAD, and shame at what was done to them, Holocaust literature is full of gaps, ellipses and silences – how, after all, do you say the unspeakable? When it comes to cinema, the question gets even thornier: how do you show the unshowable? And how can you not?

For his harrowing debut, which won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film (and the Grand Prix at Cannes), Hungarian writer/director László Nemes has a brutal solution. Like an Iñárritu action sequence stripped of all dazzle and stretched out to two hours, *Son Of Saul* throws us straight into the maelstrom of concentration-camp life as if we, too, were prisoners. Saul Ausländer (poet Géza Röhrig), is a Sonderkomando, a Jewish trustee co-opted by the Nazis. We first meet him shepherding new arrivals into the showers, removing their valuables, then piling up the bodies afterwards. When he recognises his son among the corpses, he sets out to secure him a proper Jewish burial. For the next 24 hours, Mátyás Erdély's dogged camera barely leaves Saul's side, so we only see what he sees – already far too much.

With its boxed-in ratio and ugly, seemingly endless takes, the result is a worm's-eye view of evil on an industrial scale. As Saul searches for a rabbi, we glimpse blurry Brueghelian nightmares of bonfires and burning bodies soundtracked by distant gunshots and ragged screams. The crushing irony, of course, is that Saul's mission is futile – nobody's getting out of here alive, and the dead boy may not even be his son. But just because it's futile doesn't mean its pointless: stubbornly clinging to the corpse is Saul's attempt to remain human in the face of mass dehumanisation. By placing us, helpless, in his shoes, Nemes makes us both victim and perpetrator – all complicit, all trapped, all cogs in the same awful machine. **Matt Glasby**

THE VERDICT A film to make your blood run cold, Nemes' first-person account of life, and death, in a concentration camp contains horrors you can't – and shouldn't – unsee.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** László Nemes **Starring** Géza Röhrig, Levente Molnár, Urs Rechn, Todd Charmont, Jerzy Walczak **Screenplay** László Nemes, Clara Royer **Distributor** Curzon Artificial Eye **Running Time** 107 mins



THE DIVIDE

★★★★☆ Out 22 April

ZEROING IN ON SEVEN PEOPLE FROM varying income brackets, Katharine Round's richly empathetic docu-study tots up the human cost of erupting inequality. Stats, contexts and talking heads are duly dished: Obama talks sense, Blair talks bobbins... But it's the grassroots portraits that reap returns. Travelling from gated communities to Glasgow, Round earns the trust of KFC employees, Wall Street wonders and more to show how we have been "submerged" in our financial lives. The wide range strains her focus, but the visceral effects of inequality register with an authoritative punch. **Kevin Harley**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 78 mins



MAPPLETHORPE: LOOK AT THE PICTURES

★★★★☆ Out 22 April

"LOOK AT THE PICTURES!" SPLUTTERED Senator Jesse Helms in 1989, trying to get Mapplethorpe's eye-poppingly explicit photographic art banned. Fenton Bailey and Randy Barbato's authoritative doc about the artist positively commands us to appreciate it, from flower studies to the fetish scenes that shocked '80s America. Interviewing key figures in his life, they build an anecdote-rich bio (only his 1960s girlfriend Patti Smith is missing). A hilarious sequence of curators cooing over the angles and print quality of his infamous dick pics provides welcome light relief. **Kate Stables**

› **Certificate** 18 **Running time** 108 mins



COUPLE IN A HOLE

★★★★☆ Out 8 April

A MIDDLE-AGED SCOTTISH COUPLE (Paul Higgins, Kate Dickie) are living rough in a makeshift shelter in the woods of the French Pyrenees. Gradually we discover the tragic event that led to their situation. Belgian writer/director Tom Geens' first English-language feature builds slowly, piling up underlying darkness, hinting that further tragedy can't be far off. In a tiny cast, Higgins stands out as a man desperately trying to nurture and protect his traumatised wife. Sam Care's photography and a haunting electronic score abet the atmosphere. Too bad about the easily misconstrued title, though. **Philip Kemp**

› **Certificate** 12A **Running time** 103 mins



GOLDEN YEARS

★★☆☆☆ Out 29 April

THE POST-MARIGOLD HOTEL WHEEZE of OAPs talking dirty is about as far as the comic currency stretches in this heist-com. Splicing farce, drama and politics, director/co-writer John Miller benefits most from his lead, a likeable Bernard Hill as an old-timer with pension problems. A plot to rob banks with his wife produces one good gag about his terminal politeness ("No coins, if you don't mind"), but much else here groans. Ranging awkwardly from suicides to Simon Callow's over-keen support (warning: contains moonies), it's a film too stiff for comedy, too silly for drama and too slow for fun in between. **Kevin Harley**

› **Certificate** 12A **Running time** 96 mins

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MARTYRS

★★☆☆☆ Out now

WHERE PASCAL LAUGIER'S 2008 horror can make a decent claim to the word "masterpiece", Kevin and Michael Goetz's Blumhoused update can barely justify its existence. Not what you could call bad – just depressingly pointless – it follows similarly shrieky beats into unpleasant and underwhelming territory. Bailey Noble screams hard as the innocent drafted in to clean up after troubled friend Troian Bellisario commits a terrible crime, but the addition of a softer ending and some CG fire (perhaps because it has none of its own) suggest you can't remake art, only diminish it. **Matt Glasby**

› **Certificate** 18 **Running time** 83 mins



CALAMITY JANE

★★★★☆ Out 8 April

WHAT COULD BE BETTER THAN watching Doris Day reprise her signature role, whip-cracking away in buckskin as the Deadwood stage comes a-rolling in over the hills? Joining in, of course: an option afforded by this sing-along edition of Warner Bros' unabashed 1953 attempt to cash in on *Annie Get Your Gun*'s success three years earlier. From the intricate patter of 'Just Blew In From The Windy City' to gay anthem 'Secret Love', Sammy Fain's hummable tunes and Paul Francis Webster's lyrics merit full-throated accompaniment. Don't shoot us down, though, for finding Howard Keel's Bill Hickok more mild than Wild. **Neil Smith**

› **Certificate** U **Running time** 99 mins



LOUDER THAN BOMBS

★★☆☆☆ Out 22 April

THE DEATH OF ISABELLE HUPPERT'S war photographer matriarch looms large over this listless slice-of-life family drama from *Oslo, August 31st* director Joachim Trier. Huppert's family (father Gabriel Byrne, sons Jesse Eisenberg and Devin Druid) are sleepwalking through life, until an imminent newspaper article exposing Huppert's death as suicide threatens to ruffle feathers. Punctuated by a handful of well-observed scenes that belong in a better film (including a hypnotic close-up of Huppert's face that seems to last an eternity), it's ultimately a flat, ineffectual affair that goes off with a whimper rather than a bang. **Jordan Farley**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 109 mins



A WARRIOR'S TAIL

★★★☆☆ Out now

THIS ANIMATED FAMILY ADVENTURE offers a familiar story wherein a plucky young boy (voiced by Milla Jovovich in this English dub of the Russian original) embarks on a quest to save his family, making chums and defeating evil along the way. The set-up is lent some originality by a winningly bonkers cast of animal characters – like the three-headed, Jabba the Hutt-esque gorilla voiced by Whoopi Goldberg – all animated with a vivid colour palette. Shame that the plot bogs down in some baffling mythology – but when the parts do click the result is perfectly passable. **Tom Bond**

› **Certificate** PG **Running time** 87 mins

Bastille Day

★★☆☆☆ Out 22 April

Idris predicts a riot...

THERE'S A SCENE IN BASTILLE *Day* that will stand as a towering monument to the precise moment in time it was made, as one riot inciter urges another to "unleash the hashtag" without any inkling of irony. It's an exchange that elicits chuckles for all the wrong reasons – a common occurance in this passable Parisian thriller.

Further fanning the 'Elba for Bond' flames, Big 'Dris stars as Sean Briar, a loose cannon CIA agent operating out of the French capital – Luther with a license to kill, essentially. When Richard Madden's expert pickpocket Michael Mason is implicated in a local bombing after inadvertently pilfering a C4-stuffed satchel, Briar embarks on a one-man mission to bring him in. Naturally it's all part of a larger conspiracy for the unlikely pair to blow wide open, one that goes to the heart of the French security services.

Groundbreaking it ain't – in fact the plot bears more than a passing resemblance to at least two *Die Hard*s – but there is fun to be had with *Bastille Day*. Elba and Madden prove an entertaining central duo, their relationship of convenience powered by weapons-grade bickering. Meanwhile, director James Watkins (best known for effective horrors *Eden Lake* and *The Woman In Black*) does a commendable job with the action. But for all Watkins' sincere statements that *Bastille Day* has nothing to do with terrorism, the spectre of 2015's devastating attacks in the French capital looms large over a film that evokes deadly serious subject matter (the Occupy movement, immigration policy, anti-police protests) to no real purpose.

It's this tonal mishmash that proves *Bastille Day*'s undoing, the film never quite gelling in the way Watkins and co. presumably hoped it would. In another world this could have starred Bruce Willis and been directed by Pierre Morel, but even though we're not dealing with a car crash of quite those proportions, there isn't enough here to make this particular *Bastille Day* worth celebrating. **Jordan Farley**

THE VERDICT **The ever-watchable Idris Elba and a handful of muscular action sequences are scuppered by a flaky-pastry plot which badly misjudges subject matter warranting more considered exploration.**

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** James Watkins **Starring** Idris Elba, Richard Madden, Charlotte Le Bon, Kelly Reilly **Screenplay** Andrew Baldwin **Distributor** Studiocanal **Running time** 92 mins



Neither was particularly thrilled about driving around the Arc de Triomphe.


The fight for a seat on the Piccadilly line was getting out of hand.

London Has Fallen

★★☆☆☆ Out now A right old two and eight...

YOU SUSPECT LONDON'S history of terrorist outrages barely registered in the minds of the brains behind this *Olympus Has Fallen* sequel as they cast their eyes around the globe for another scenic victim of indiscriminate carnage. Tastelessness, however, is the least of *LHF*'s failings.

Director Babak Najafi's go-again sees Benjamin Asher (Aaron Eckhart) – the widowed president who survived a North Korea-backed attack on the White House in Antoine Fuqua's 2013 original – and his equally indestructible, soon-to-be-a-father bodyguard Mike Banning (a sweary Gerard Butler) take Air Force One to Blighty for a prime ministerial funeral. Too late do they realise that the PM has been clandestinely offed by a vengeful Pakistani arms dealer with precisely this in mind: to bring the free world's leaders together in one spot so they can be picked off in one fell swoop.

Though there's something grimly appalling at watching barely masked clones of Merkel, Sarkozy and Berlusconi getting shot, drowned and detonated in a blizzard of ill-rendered CGI, it rapidly becomes apparent that this hilariously OTT bloodbath is as entertaining as *LHF* is going to get. You soon start to wish the movie's four scripters had paid half as much attention to keeping Asher alive as they do to massacring his G7 compadres, so bland and formulaic are the subsequent shenanigans.

Eckhart, needless to say, thwarts his particular assassination attempt, propelling him and Butler on a bromantic quest through a dimly lit, bizarrely under-populated metropolis to elude their persecutor's army of goons while Morgan Freeman's Veep looks impotently on from Washington. And it is here that *LHF*'s greatest weakness hoves into view. Crass we can take; silly we can handle. But boring? You're having a laugh, mate. **Neil Smith**

THE VERDICT **Amid all the mayhem, Butler and Eckhart's chemistry remains basically intact. But that doesn't stop this being bloodthirsty, derivative and xenophobic nonsense.**

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Babak Najafi **Starring** Gerard Butler, Aaron Eckhart, Morgan Freeman, Radha Mitchell **Screenplay** Katrin Benedikt, Christian Gudegast, Creighton Rothenberger, Chad St. John **Distributor** Lionsgate **Running time** 99 mins



JOHNNY GUITAR

★★★★☆ Out 6 May

NOT TOO MANY WESTERNS culminate in a six-gun showdown between two women – but then Nicholas Ray wasn't your average filmmaker. His 1954 movie is named for Sterling Hayden's wandering gunslinger, but Hayden's merely an onlooker to the central relationship: the lethal rivalry between saloon-keeper Joan Crawford and butch cattle queen Mercedes McCambridge. The film baffled American critics – but François Truffaut adored it, calling it "dream-like, magical, unreal to a degree, delirious". He wasn't far wrong, either. **Philip Kemp**

› **Certificate** PG **Running time** 110 mins



MOJAVE

★★★☆☆ Out now

THIS CURIOUS DRAMA FROM *The Departed* screenwriter William Monahan sees Garrett Hedlund's lost-soul artist Thomas going walkabout in the desert. There, he confronts devilish psychopath Oscar Isaac – babbling away like Dennis Hopper in *Apocalypse Now* in a can't-take-your-eyes-off-him performance. Monahan adeptly captures an air of faded, stinking decadence – but after an unforeseen murder, the third act never really materialises, while the cod-philosophical whimsy leaves you dehydrated. Shame. **James Mottram**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 91 mins



KICKING OFF

★★★☆☆ Out 21 April

THERE'S A CLEAR DEBT TO EDGAR Wright in this entertaining comedy about a pair of football-mad friends (Warren Brown and Greg McHugh) who kidnap a referee. The madcap plot, sweary dialogue and self-referential style are nothing new, but first-time director Matt Wilde pulls them together in interesting ways. Robert Farquhar's authentic-sounding script and the two lead performances buzz with the directionless energy of a frustrated fan at times. But overall this is a thoughtful look not only at football fever but all forms of obsession. **Tom Bond**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 81 mins



ANGUISH

★★★★☆ Out now

PRODUCER SONNY MALLHI (THE *Strangers*, *Shutter*, *Old Boy*) turns director with this sensitive take on the possession genre. Disenfranchised teenager Tess (Ryan Simpkins) arrives with her mum in a new town for a fresh start only to get possessed by the spirit of a similarly aged girl who tragically died weeks earlier. With Tess already suffering from an identity disorder and the mums of both girls connected by a shared grief, there's no shortage of psychological or domestic drama. The end result is a refreshingly character-focused horror story, garnished with creepily effective visuals. **Matt Looker**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 90 mins

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GOD'S NOT DEAD 2

★★☆☆☆ Out 29 April

THIS FOLLOW-UP TO THE 2014 faith-based US hit brings us Christian Rock, courtroom drama and *Twin Peaks*' Ray Wise mugging to the camera. Melissa Joan Hart is Grace Wesley, a teacher sued by two parents for comparing Jesus' teachings to Martin Luther King's in their daughter's history lesson. Inspired, supposedly, by real-life US cases, its core values are undermined by some amateur-hour acting, poor production values, and director Harold Cronk ensures it's all as subtle as being whacked over the head with a King James Bible. **James Mottram**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 120 mins (tbc)



THE ABSENT ONE

★★★☆☆ Out 8 April

IF MIKKEL NØRGAARD'S NOIRISH *The Keeper Of Lost Causes* seemed none-more-Nordic, wait until you see the sequel. An old cop's suicide renews the interest of basement-dwelling cop duo, Carl (Nikolaj Lie Kaas) and Assad (Fares Fares), in a 20-year-old murder. The heavy investigation involves junkie girls, posh men, boarding-school secrets and surprise foetuses. Lie Kaas' furrowed lead and Norgaard's taut orchestration of flashback-pumped plotting help flesh out old clichés – at least until the climax takes a glum turn for the overwrought. **Kevin Harley**

› **Certificate** 18 **Running time** 120 mins



MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING 2

★★☆☆☆ Out now

FOURTEEN YEARS SINCE NIA Vardalos' comedy became a big fat hit comes the belated sequel, again produced by Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson. With the original cast back, and Vardalos scripting again, it doesn't stray far from the 'overbearing family' formula that dominated the original. Vardalos' Toula must now deal with her parents getting hitched (don't ask) and her daughter (Elena Kampouris, one to watch) going to college. Michael Constantine, as Toula's father, nabs the best of the precious few funny lines. **James Mottram**

› **Certificate** 12A **Running time** 94 mins



HEAVEN KNOWS WHAT

★★★★☆ Out 29 April

AGAINST THE ODDS, NY BROTHERS Josh and Ben Safdie's hyper-indie aesthetic brings fresh life to that old story of two lovers joined at the needle. That life has a name: Arielle Holmes, whose own history inspires her electrifying portrait of Harley, a junkie equally hooked on no-good fellow addict Ilya (Caleb Landry Jones) in this tale of desperation and co-dependency. The Safdies pull off this episodic plunge into a scuzz-nik world with brash, bracing immediacy: but it's Holmes' innate charisma that keeps you there. **Kevin Harley**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 94 mins



She was determined not to blink first.

The Divergent Series: Allegiant

★★☆☆☆ Out Now **The franchise hits a wall...**

FIRST, THE GOOD NEWS: AFTER *Insurgent* – aka *Divergent 2* – tapped out that grey, sim-city-fighting mood, this shiny threequel abseils over the giant wall surrounding dystopian Chicago and smartly drops us into a vibrantly scarlet, Martian-looking landscape. Director Robert Schwentke even kicks the enjoyably sub-*Mad Max* extreme-sport action sequences into a higher gear than previous instalments. But he's banjaxed when the plot dictates that Tris (Shailene Woodley) and her fellow rebels are whisked to CGI-laden genetic-engineering biodome The Bureau. Here, the high-school hokum of the Divergent 'factions' becomes high-tech eugenics, as kindly director David (Jeff Daniels) determines that only Tris' 'pure' genes can save blighted mankind.

Always fond of pseudo-science and ethical quandaries, the *Divergent* series reaches a new, mildly pretentious peak here. But its sort-of-topical themes of genetic exclusion, surveillance, racism and ignoring neighbouring conflict don't translate into meaty exploits. Instead the film favours wide-eyed wrangling between Tris and boyfriend Tobias (Theo James). The chief joy of the series, Shailene Woodley's tenacious but vulnerable Tris, seems to be unusually Redundant, while Tobias is Resurgent, muscling through mysteriously violent Marine-style Bureau raids like an action hero.

Splitting the final book into two movies (*Ascendant* is due next summer) should have given *Allegiant* endless plot possibilities to play with. Instead it drags out the Bureau business, with only the eye-candy compensations of cool space-age kit. And though we're asked to invest in the fate of the Chicago inhabitants as well as Team Tris, we see only slivers of the Allegiant vs Factionless war. **Kate Stables**

THE VERDICT This over-extended teen dystopia is treading water, coming up short on its trademark punchy plotting – and the wonderful Woodley.

› **Certificate** 12A **Director** Robert Schwentke **Starring** Shailene Woodley, Theo James, Naomi Watts, Octavia Spencer, Jeff Daniels **Screenplay** Noah Oppenheim, Adam Cooper, Bill Collage **Distributor** eOne **Running time** 121 mins

Box office charts 22.02.16 – 20.03.16



ZOOTROPOLIS
With the trend for remaking Disney 'toons in live action, will this one day be retooled with real animals? And will half the cast be recycled by craft services to the feed the other half?



THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT
In which the characters go beyond the giant wall encircling Chicago to discover the shocking truth about that outside world – that everyone's a bit over YA and prefers R-rated superheroes.



10 CLOVERFIELD LANE
Now the 'Cloververse' is a thing, can we have a film about what happened to the Statue Of Liberty's head? Is it on NY's newest crazy golf course or visiting family on Easter Island?

UK TOP 10



POSITION	FILM	THIS MONTH	SINCE RELEASE	WEEKS OUT THERE
1	Deadpool ★★★★	£10.9m	£36.8m	6
2	London Has Fallen ★★	£8.3m	£8.3m	3
3	Kung Fu Panda 3 ★★★★	£7.1m	£7.1m	2
4	Grimsby ★★	£4.9m	£4.9m	4
5	Hail, Caesar! ★★★★	£4m	£4m	3
6	How To Be Single ★★★	£3.5m	£5.4m	5
7	The Divergent Series: Allegiant ★★	£3.2m	£3.2m	2
8	Alvin And The Chipmunks: The Road Chip ★★★	£2.8m	£15.9m	6
9	The Revenant ★★★★★	£2m	£23m	10
10	10 Cloverfield Lane ★★★★	£1.6m	£1.6m	1

US TOP 10



POSITION	FILM	THIS MONTH	SINCE RELEASE	WEEKS OUT THERE
1	Zootropolis ★★★★	$201.8m	$201.8m	3
2	Deadpool ★★★★	$105.5m	$340.9m	6
3	London Has Fallen ★★	$50.1m	$50.1m	3
4	10 Cloverfield Lane ★★★★	$45.2m	$45.2m	2
5	Gods Of Egypt N/A	$29.5m	$29.5m	4
6	The Divergent Series: Allegiant ★★	$29.1m	$29.1m	1
7	Risen ★★	$22.6m	$34.4m	5
8	Kung Fu Panda 3 ★★★★	$21.3m	$138.4m	8
9	Whiskey Tango Foxtrot ★★★	$19.3m	$19.3m	3
10	Miracles From Heaven N/A	$18.6m	$18.6m	1



WHISKEY TANGO FOXTROT
Just in case you missed it, there's a cunningly disguised, rather cheeky acronym in the title that denotes an expression of disbelief. Hoping that the sequel will be titled For Foxtrot's Sake.



LONDON HAS FALLEN
Where will the franchise point its compass next? Sci-fi (Earth Has Fallen)? Chiropody (Arches Have Fallen)? A hockey team on the slide (How The Mighty Ducks Have Fallen)?



GRIMSBY
To obtain a 15, the spy-com made "reductions to a couple of scenes of crude humour". So if you were only mildly appalled by the elephant-vagina scene, that's the reason why.

Still out, still good...

Our pick of the movies out now



HIGH-RISE ★★★★
"Ben Wheatley and Amy Jump's J.G. Ballard adap is a seamless author/filmmaker hybrid, honouring the novel while making it their own highly cinematic beast. A Brit-film of singular vision, blackened wit and audacity."



THE WITCH ★★★★
"Robert Eggers' meticulous debut is one of the most genuinely scary horror movies of recent years. His ability to keep the lid on all the hysteria until the moment he wants to blow it sky-high is what makes *The Witch* so effective."



EDDIE THE EAGLE ★★★★
"Dexter Fletcher's semi-biopic dramedy is likely to be the most uplifting film of the year. From niche subject matter, he's made a movie that's both universal and unashamedly British. Funky, genuinely moving and endlessly good-natured."



MIDNIGHT SPECIAL ★★★★
"Teaming up for the fourth time, director Jeff Nichols and star Michael Shannon deliver another slow-burn, grounded triumph. Taken as a throwback to the thrillers of Carpenter and Spielberg, it is special indeed."

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Coming soon...

The big hitters on the cards for next issue...

X-MEN: APOCALYPSE 19 MAY

Finally, the movie every X-fan's been waiting for: the origin story of Prof X's baldness. Plus: Oscar Isaac turning purple with rage as Apocalypse, a mutant so powerful he's nabbed half of the movie's title. But even he can't prevent the 99.99 per cent likelihood of a Hugh Jackman cameo.



BAD NEIGHBOURS 2 6 MAY

With the original banking $271m, a sequel was as inevitable as the flowerbeds being abused during a keg party. Seth Rogen and Rose Byrne team with Zac Efron to fight sorority leader Chloë Grace Moretz. There will be, if not blood, then several other bodily fluids.



THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE 13 MAY

The fact it's taken them this long to cash in on the mobile-app sensation (which launched in '09) means this won't be some feather-brained knock-off. In any case, it can't be a worse videogame-related movie starring Peter Dinklage (playing the Mighty Eagle) than *Pixels*.



SING STREET 20 MAY

John Carney's (*Once*) musical drama would've been reviewed this issue if not for a date change nudging it into blockbuster season; if early plaudits are any indication, it's well set to hold its own against the big guns (and we don't mean the new *Thomas The Tank Engine* movie).



ALICE THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS 27 MAY

Or Ali G Through The Looking Glass, featuring as it does Sacha Baron Cohen as newbie Time (half man, half clock, all bonkers) with direction from SBC's *The 11 O'Clock Show* cohort James Bobin. Plus, alas, Alan Rickman's final film performance.

SUMMER PREVIEW

From comic-book epics to gritty crime capers, blockbusters to indies, we round up the big guns and secret weapons that are going to blow this season away.



THE 6 DIVI

Pick a side... Captain America and Iron Man are going head-to-head in a superhero-stuffed face-off that could change the Marvel Cinematic Universe as we know it. Just don't go calling it Avengers 2.5... **WORDS** MATT MAYTUM



Big Gun

THE AVENGERS GO TO WAR... WITH EACH OTHER.

REAT DE

CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR
STARRING Chris Evans, Robert Downey Jr., Scarlett Johansson, Anthony Mackie, Sebastian Stan, Chadwick Boseman, Elizabeth Olsen
DIRECTORS Anthony Russo, Joe Russo
ETA 29 April

It's the first time Steve doesn't really know the answer," admits Chris Evans of Mr Rogers' conundrum in his latest 'solo' adventure. "In the first *Captain America* it's pretty clear Nazis are bad. We can all agree with that. In *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, it's S.H.I.E.L.D. being run by Hydra. In the *Avengers* movies, aliens are no good; we want to fight them." For a complex cinematic universe that so far comprises 12 movies across two distinct 'phases', he has a way of making it all sound pretty simple. One of the most thoroughly decent good guys in a landscape of sometimes shady, often snarky antiheroes, Steve Rogers (aka Captain

>>



Red steel: Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr. is back as Iron Man.

"THERE ARE NO CLEAR LINES BETWEEN WHAT IS RIGHT AND WHAT IS WRONG. THERE'S JUST A POINT OF VIEW..." CHRIS EVANS

America) has found himself with reasons to rally against authority since emerging from the deepfreeze, but *Captain America: Civil War* – the first film in the MCU's Phase 3 – sees the clean-cut soldier at his most conflicted when he finds himself facing off against his former teammate Tony Stark, aka Iron Man.

"It's always been pretty cut and dry for him to know which side of the coin to fall on, but this one is tricky because this conflict is a little more akin to a day-to-day struggle that we all go through where there are no clear lines between what is right, and what is wrong," continues Evans. "There's just a point of view, and I think it's hard for him to understand what the right thing to do is and what his role is this time around."

There's a lot to wrap your head around when it comes to *Civil War*; the dizzying cast list has seen it dubbed '*Avengers* 2.5'. Featuring almost a full roster of Avengers (Chris Hemsworth's Thor and Mark Ruffalo's Hulk are sitting it out), it boasts a line-up usually reserved for one of the phase-capping event movies. Picking up story threads from *The Winter Soldier* and *Avengers: Age Of Ultron* (with a dash of *Ant-Man*), a 'Previously in the MCU' prologue wouldn't go amiss, particularly as this is a franchise in which there are stakes and consequences. In *The Winter Soldier*, S.H.I.E.L.D. crumbled; by the credits-roll on *Age Of Ultron*, there was an entirely new Avengers line-up.

"We do very much pick up the storytelling where *The Winter Soldier* and *Age Of Ultron* left off," explains director Anthony Russo, one half







CHRIS EVANS: HISTORY BOY

The first Avenger looks back over his multi-film journey.

MISSION AUDITION

"I remember being really, *really* nervous when I went for the first audition. It was such a daunting task and it was also a really long commitment, so it was... scary, y'know? Luckily all those fears have kind of diluted over the years – the films have been fantastic and it's ultimately been the best choice of my life."

COSTUME DRAMA

"That suit didn't feel like it belonged to me when I first put it on. I felt like I was sneaking into someone else's closet, trying on something I shouldn't be. It felt foreign. It actually felt like Marvel was making a mistake to be honest. I think I was just worried that I was going to let people down."

FIRST TIME NERVES

"I just remember being nervous throughout that whole first movie. It was fun, don't get me wrong. But it was like walking through landmines whenever I even *talked* about the film because I couldn't give stuff away. I guess about half way through *The First Avenger* I started to think, OK, I can do this."

TEAM GAMES

"When I first met the other Avengers, so to speak, our film hadn't actually been released yet – so that was weird. But they were all great. Just hanging out with guys like Downey and all the more experienced actors in the cast – Ruffalo, Sam Jackson – I was in awe. They were all such wonderful people to work with."

TRUE GRIT

"I loved the Russos straight away. I loved the way their brains work – they cut out the fat when they're speaking. I really liked the direction *Winter Soldier* took. Nothing against Joss Whedon, he's epic, but the difference is that Joss makes comic book movies and the Russos make dramas about people who happen to have heightened abilities." **PB**



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of the sibling duo who also helmed Cap's last outing and will oversee the upcoming two-part *Avengers: Infinity War*. The directors are chatting to *Total Film* after a couple of days of reshoots. ("All the [*TV*] shows we've worked on, we always had a policy of reshooting," explains Anthony's brother/directing partner Joe. "You make the movie three times: you write it, you shoot it, you edit it. You can really move the needle of the movie [*with reshoots*].") Picking up from *The Winter Soldier* means dealing with Bucky Barnes. Cap's former brother-in-arms turned brainwashed assassin, Bucky (Sebastian Stan) is struggling to fit into a world where he's an an outcast and a criminal. "Where you see him at the post-credits scene [*in* The Winter Soldier], which is at that museum, he's starting to put the pieces together about his past and learn about what he's been up to," laughs Stan. "It's a very difficult starting point for him."

And picking up after *Age Of Ultron* means dealing with the Sokovia incident, the Avengers' most recent escapade that saw a considerable chunk of the Eastern European city hoisted skyward by a rogue AI, before it all came crashing to the ground. The similarities between this year's *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice* and *Civil War* don't stop at the clashing heroes; both films see their supers having to face the cost of their world-saving missions. "Tony is confronted by a civilian who gets in his face and in his head about the Avengers' collateral damage," explains Robert Downey Jr., returning to the role of the genius, billionaire, playboy philanthropist for the sixth time (if you're not counting his post-credits sting in *The Incredible Hulk*). "Tony looks back on things, gets his bearings and doesn't do the obvious thing; he takes a conservative point of view."

When the government proposes the Sokovia Accords agreement – to monitor and regulate the superheroes – Cap and Iron Man come down on different sides of the fence. Stark's surprise choice sees him enter an "uneasy alliance" with Thaddeus Ross (William Hurt, reprising his *Incredible Hulk* character). "I love that Steve gets to develop friction with Tony Stark," says Evans. "They're very different men but they really do want the same thing. It's like politics – we all want a happy result, we're all trying to fight for good, but we just have very different beliefs and very strong convictions about how to do it."

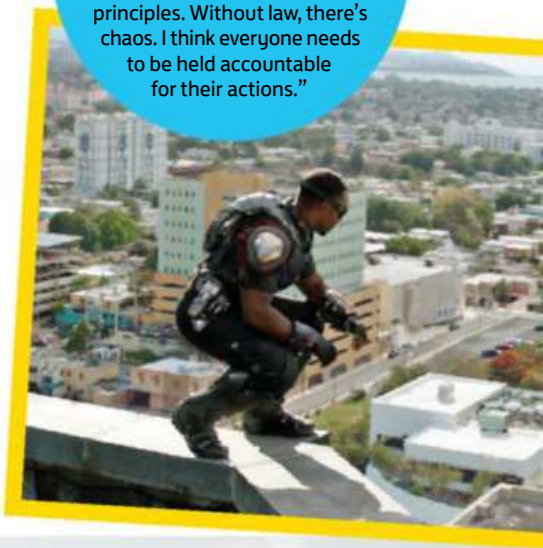
If the rift starts with the Sokovia Accords, it's intensified by Cap's relationship with Bucky. "Bucky is Cap's best friend," states Evans. "He's his oldest friend in the world." Having previously faced him as the Winter Soldier, Cap is sympathetic to his old bud's predicament, and as evidenced by *Ant-Man*'s post-credits tease, he's not willing to hand >>



#TEAMCAP OR #TEAMIRONMAN

Anthony Mackie

"It's funny – I think I would have to side with Iron Man. That seems ironic. I always feel like everyone needs some governing principles. Without law, there's chaos. I think everyone needs to be held accountable for their actions."





#TeamCap: Falcon (Anthony Mackie), Ant-Man (Paul Rudd), Hawkeye (Jeremy Renner), Captain America (Chris Evans), Scarlet Witch (Elizabeth Olsen) and Bucky Barnes (Sebastian Stan).



Flying high: Iron Man and War Machine (Don Cheadle).

#TEAMCAP OR #TEAMIRONMAN

Daniel Brühl

"My interest and fascination [*in the films*] started with *Iron Man*. But it was such a pleasure working with Chris Evans – he is such a great dude and such a likeable guy – that I would stick to him. It's completely wrong answering that if you then see the film!"

him over to the authorities. "They both have the same thing in common, right?" Stan asks *TF* while ruminating on the relationship. "They're two people out of time. They don't really have a past. Their past, their family, their world: it's all gone. Their relationship now is based on what those things are that they have in common, much more than it is 'best old pals from the '40s'."

An incident between Bucky and James 'War Machine' Rhodes (Don Cheadle) further drives the wedge between Steve and Tony, resulting in the rift that spawns the civil war of the title. The epic-scale in-fighting is the "smart, sexy Marvel idea" in contrast with the colossal *Avengers* events, according to Downey. For the Russos, once the genie was let out of the bottle, it was never going to go back in. "Once we started thinking about *Civil War*, we just kept coming back to it," says Anthony Russo. "The idea just kept getting stronger and stronger in our minds." Taking inspiration from the Mark Millar-penned 2006/7 comics run of the same name, *Civil War* is not a straight-up adaptation. "It's a very different take on it," confirms Joe Russo. "It's loosely based on the comic. It borrows from the spirit of the comic... It's the Marvel Cinematic Universe's war."

With war, there are always sides to be chosen. "I think team Cap stacks up pretty well!" laughs Evans. "We certainly hold our own." Anthony Mackie's Sam Wilson (aka Falcon), is a newly minted Avenger, and he's building on his relationship with Cap from *TWS*. "You see Sam become more of a confidante and a colleague of Cap," says Mackie. "And also, you see Sam more on his own, making decisions and working as



Power up: (left) Bucky Barnes; (right) #TeamIronMan.





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FRENEMY MINE

More warring duos who secretly need each other...

CHARLES XAVIER AND ERIK LEHNSHERR

Their shaky alliance pitched "between rage and serenity," Prof X tempers Magneto while Magneto keeps his X-bezzie sharp. They had fun in bars together in *First Class*, before X's peacenik persona and Magneto's hawkish tendencies chafed. Sharing an on/off bond of tender empathy *and* levitating football stadiums, this pair complete each other.

ROCKY BALBOA AND APOLLO CREED

Sparring partners turned pals, the boxing buds share bruises and shorts. Apollo calls Rocky names ("Bum!") and punches him daft before becoming his trainer. After Creed dies, Rocky is moved to thaw the Cold War by fighting Creed's Soviet nemesis. And, by training Creed's son, he saves the next generation too.

ANAKIN SKYWALKER AND OBI-WAN KENOBI

"He was a good friend..." Obi and Ani were top bros: they shared space-cars, hung out in bars, fought old men together. But Obi decides Ani will be the death of him and chops off his legs. Years of understandable Ani-mosity climax in post-life reunion. "You've changed," says Obi (presumably).

HENRI DUCARD AND BRUCE WAYNE

Ducard and Wayne become buds in prison and afterwards, sharing tips on style and hallucinogenic drugs. A Magneto/Xavier-style fall-out follows: Wayne digs compassion and capes, Ducard thinks compassion is wussy and capes are daft. It all ends in a punch-up, of course: but who knew Duc's daughter would get involved?

PETER PARKER AND HARRY OSBORN

Like any story worth telling, this one's about a girl. And a Goblin. You know the drill: high-school buds fancy MJ, MJ fancies Spidey, Pete kills Harry's dad, Harry gets pissed *and* (American meaning) pissed, Pete blows him up... Tragedy brings a touching reunion, until the emo-Goblin reboot spoils everything. **KH**



Talking it out: Tony Stark and Steve Rogers unsuited.

'IT'S A DIFFERENT TAKE ON THE CIVIL WAR. IT BORROWS FROM THE SPIRIT OF THE COMIC BUT IT'S THE MARVEL CINEMATIC UNIVERSE'S WAR' JOE RUSSO

an Avenger on his own." Naturally Bucky also sides with Cap. "It's easy for Bucky," confirms Stan. "Bucky just goes, 'I'm going to follow the guy that I might have a future with, that might help me live a life.'" Also on Steve's side are Ant-Man (Scott Lang being a Cap fanboy), Hawkeye, and Wanda Maximoff (Elizabeth Olsen), another recent addition to the Avengers team who actually hails from Sokovia. "Where we pick up," says Olsen, "I think it's roughly about a year after the Sokovian disaster. [*Wanda*] has adopted the Avengers as a surrogate family, so she's now part of the team. She's more confident in her abilities."

Stark has an equally intimidating line-up on his side. "I was tickled to get Black Widow," chuckles Downey. "Since *Iron Man 2* Natasha [*and Tony Stark have*] never shared an hour where one of them wasn't trying to deceive the other one. Particularly after *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* and how close she and Cap were." Scarlett Johansson, returning to play Widow for the fifth time, eyes the teams from a cooler perspective. "Natasha doesn't take things personally and isn't really about taking sides, *per se*," she says. "I don't think she sees things quite so black and white. She likes to live in that grey area."

A couple of former allies naturally side with Tony. He and Rhodes go way back (to when Rhodes was actually played by Terrence Howard), and Paul Bettany's Vision – sprung from Tony's former operating system-cum-butler J.A.R.V.I.S. – is another natural fit. But Stark also brings a couple of significant new players to the table, including Black Panther, the costumed alter ego of T'Challa, a royal from (fictional) African nation Wakanda (visited briefly in *Age Of Ultron*). The first black superhero in mainstream US comics, he's an important new addition to the line-up, and is played here by *Get On Up*'s Chadwick Boseman. (The character has a solo movie, directed by *Creed*'s Ryan Coogler, earmarked for a 2018 release). "The Russos do not spare his introduction," chuckles Anthony Mackie, "They introduce him in such a riveting, cool way." Despite trailers revealing >>









#TEAMCAP OR #TEAMIRONMAN

Chadwick Boseman
"I'd say overall I'd be on Cap's side. Just based on the movie, I'd be on Cap's side."

T'Challa's allegiance to Tony, don't expect him to be a straightforward team player. "The thing about T'Challa in this movie is that he has his own agenda and his own world that he has to protect," reveals Boseman. "He has his own lineage that he has to live up to, so he can't just take orders from Iron Man, he can't just take orders from Cap... He has his own agenda. He is not really picking a side."

Boseman could be one of the film's most valuable players if the praise showered on him by his colleagues is anything to go by. According to Anthony Russo, "He's as handsome as a leading man gets, while at the same time he has that great ability to be an intense character actor. It's an amazing combination." Downey is similarly effusive. "Chadwick is a really intelligent, interesting, dynamic guy and he's an excellent choice. You need someone in this story who sees everyone picking sides and drawing lines, but he has his own agenda that is personal to his own trajectory." Don't count on Black Panther staying on the fringes of the team forever though; Natasha has her eye on him, with Johansson explaining, "She's interested in him and interested in recruiting him."

Another key character that Tony brings into the fold is "Underoos", better known as Spider-Man, following a behind-the-scenes deal between Marvel Studios' owner Disney, and Spider-Man's big-screen custodian Sony. With Spidey now 'home' as part of the MCU, his inclusion in the line-up (see overleaf) has been emphatically embraced by fans, to internet-breaking effect (his brief introduction helped the most recent trailer to score 100m views in its first 24 hrs). His presence also ensures that it feels like more of an event movie than your 'standard' Marvel MCU standalone. That's a heady roster of characters, and we haven't even mentioned the most closely guarded secret of them all, Daniel Brühl's villain of the piece.

Withheld from all trailers and pre-release stills, little is known about his character. When *TF* puts Brühl on the spot, he won't even directly corroborate the IMDb listing that says he's playing Baron Zemo, a famous supervillain from the comics who continues his father's Nazi legacy. Having had a slapped wrist for revealing too much previously, Brühl is tight-lipped but charmingly so. "Not that much," he laughs in our face when we ask what he can tell us. "I was really told not to because there are so many secrets in the film. And also my character's quite mysterious, so I'm really scared to say too much. The things I mentioned in interviews before were already too much – and I thought it was nothing!"

He will at least concede that his character does fall on the villainous side of the fence. "Yes, but



ROYAL BLOOD

Chadwick Boseman introduces the world to T'Challa, aka Black Panther...

How would you describe Black Panther to someone who'd never heard of him?
He has the dual activity of being a monarch of a country, and he's literally a detective. I think he's a misunderstood character because he makes decisions sometimes without consulting other people [*laughs*], without working as a team. It's very hard to predict why he does what he does.

Will we get a good sense of the character in Civil War?
I don't feel like you'll have a deep sense of the character because it's a brief introduction. It leaves a lot to be explored. You want the character to have an arc, but I think there's a lot you don't know about him at the end of the movie.

How does he fit into this film?
He is brought into the story because there are Wakandans who are the victims of the tragedy that happens because of the superheroes. So he's brought in really as a political [*figure*], and he's useful. It's not really as a superhero. He fits that whole theme of the movie.

Is his identity as secret?
The Wakandans know who he is. It's like, his purpose is to protect his country. It's not necessarily to protect everyone [*laughs*]. He is not that type of superhero. He has a singular purpose in that respect when he's coming into this movie.

How do you approach this sort of role differently to playing a real-life person?
You have more in terms of flexibility. At the end of the day it ends up being the same. You still have research. You read comic books. The character has a history. You end up making choices once you absorb all the information, whether it be real or fictional. The main difference is... You can't go to Wakanda and do research [*laughs*]. I can't go talk to T'Challa's mum or dad. I'm looking for things that are similar to the character in Africa and throughout the world.

How much time did you spend in the costume?
In any given day, it's 14 hours in the suit. It's not the most comfortable thing. You don't really want to come out of it though. Getting it on and getting it off is much more of a nuisance than keeping it on. The only reason you might is because you're like, "I've got to use the bathroom." [*laughs*] That's the only reason why you come out. **MM**



Fighting man: (above) Captain America in a tussle.







what I like is it's not a stereotype," he muses. "It's not a guy who's mean and sinister, but he's actually very clever – a very smart guy who does everything out of a very understandable reason and motivation." The part was written with Brühl (and his skill with accents) in mind. Chances are he might still be a mysterious figure, even after *Civil War*. "Some of the things that happen in the film, and why they happen, are because of him. He is orchestrating things that happen throughout the film. I think that's something I can say, goddam it!" Perhaps he'll be a Christoph Waltz-type villain, *a la SPECTRE*?

'THE FACE-OFF WAS PRETTY SURREAL. IT FELT LIKE THE KIND OF EPIC MOMENT WHERE YOU KNOW IT'S REALLY BIG' SCARLETT JOHANSSON

Given that this is *Civil War* though, it's going to be Tony Stark who ends up being Cap's primary antagonist. Avengers will clash. When the teams line up, expect quite the spectacle. "It was pretty surreal having that face-off with everyone on the tarmac," admits Johansson. "There have been a few moments where you look around and realise you're in good company. I remember doing the first *Avengers* and all of us getting together in the circle and having our epic hero moment and again in *Avengers 2*. This scene felt like that kind of unbelievable epic moment where you know this is really big."

With that kind of line-up, it's hard not to have those nagging doubts about '*Avengers* 2.5' creep in, but everyone involved is adamant that this is Cap's film. "Cap still drives the story," states Mackie. "When you leave the movie, you're introduced to Cap and where he's going. It's 100 per cent a Captain America film, not an Avengers film." Stan concurs. "He's the central piece, and it's his story. Everybody else sort of serves a part. I always though, this was really clever when I read the script... To include Iron Man and all these guys in it, and still have it be a Captain America story. So that will be seen when the movie comes out."

For the Russos, it's "without a question" a Cap movie. "I think that the emotional throughline of the movie rests with Cap," explains Joe Russo. "It's important to us. This is called *Captain America: Civil War* – the movie is pulled from his point of view." Evans himself says he "definitely didn't have any doubts... It always feels very relatable and authentic. The struggle feels human. None of it feels larger than life." Emotional might end up being a key word here. The Russos describe the film as a "psychological thriller" (in contrast to how *The Winter Soldier* was pitched as a political thriller), and it looks set to drill into our heroes' heads. Ultron's prophecy of tearing the team apart from the inside might come to fruition yet. Given the audience investment in the sprawling MCU, there's a lot riding on this. "It's not enemy vs hero, or villain versus hero," sums up Evans. "It's friends vs friends. This is sometimes the most dramatic conflict... Steve and Tony are both uncompromising men. They really believe in what they're fighting for but they have different outlooks on life – so whenever you put those two people in the room, it's going to be electric." >>

#TEAMCAP OR #TEAMIRONMAN

Elizabeth Olsen

"I think Tony's on the safe side, and I'm someone who lives on the safe side of life. But in the argument of our film, Captain America has the better argument."



#TEAMCAP OR #TEAMIRONMAN

Sebastian Stan
"I don't know, I can understand both sides. It's a tough one for me to answer that one."

For Stark, his history with Cap extends further back than his own lifespan. "I think the undertone for Tony is that he's been falling short of his dad's memory of Steve for a long time and that his best friend is the one that's creating all this trouble," explains Downey. "If there's one thing that's been very clearly set up, it's that Steve and Tony have a past and that their past spans several generations."

That's what makes the Civil War so tragic – they've all been close with everyone," adds Evans. "Black Widow and Cap bonded in a lot of ways. But the most heartbreaking friendship to see broken up is Cap and Tony." The audience won't know who to side with. The Russos admit it'll be a win if the masses filing out of multiplexes are split 50/50 between #TeamCap and #TeamIronMan.



Face off: former friends now enemies Cap and Iron Man.

If that all sounds distinctly weighty, the Russos are doing nothing to play that side of it down. Expect significant ripples to be felt throughout Phase 3, not least in the Russos' own *Avengers: Infinity War* Parts 1 & 2, due in 2018 and 2019 respectively. "If you've been a fan of the Marvel Cinematic Universe," teases Joe Russo, "this is a payoff movie, sort of a penultimate film on a relationship level for all the characters that you love."

"The stakes are life and death," booms Mackie. "The great thing about the Marvel universe is characters can die." Given that Sam Wilson has recently taken on the Captain America mantle in the comics-verse, could Mackie be shouldering that responsibility in the future? "I don't want to get myself too excited about the idea," he shrugs. "And Chris is my boy. If it happens, it happens. And if it don't, you know, it's been a good ride." Stan – whose Bucky Barnes has also been a comic Cap – is similarly non-committal to the idea. "It's a race, not a marathon," he reflects. "Who knows what can happen in the next couple of years? I mean, you never know."

And as far as the Russos are concerned, the future is not yet set. Discussing Marvel's "one film at a time" attitude, they admit that the story for *Infinity War* isn't even completely locked down yet, and the MCU depends on the input from the various filmmakers overseeing the array of Phase 3 titles. "We're actually very close to a lot of the directors who are working on [*the*] other films," say Joe Russo. "Ideas are bounced back and forth a lot. We spent some time with Peyton Reed last week to go through *Ant-Man 2*, and talk about what part we were hopeful to have for Scott Lang in *Infinity War*. That depends on where they go with *Ant-Man 2*, so it's very much all give and take. We have a very zen approach to our management level."

In the battle for Marvel surpremacy, there's still everything to play for. TF

"HEY EVERYONE..."

Spidey senses tingle as Peter Parker finally joins the MCU.

After a long (and we're guessing boring) legal wrangle, Spider-Man is finally going to appear alongside the Avengers on the big screen, with Marvel honcho Kevin Feige and Sony coming to a mutually beneficial decision to share the freshly rebooted webslinger. Played by 19-year-old Tom Holland (*The Impossible*, *In The Heart Of The Sea*), this is the youngest cinematic Spidey ever. While his involvement is being kept largely under wraps – "He's certainly a character that's more fun for people to discover when they go see the movie," says Joe Russo, evasively – his brief appearance at the end of the trailer, springing into action and cuffing Cap with a well timed webbing spurt, giddy with excitement. While new tech (Stark's?) means Spider-Man can squint, the suit is pleasingly retro; rather than getting a radical overhaul, the costume, with its minimal chest badge, almost harks back to the Nicholas Hammond-starring TV show of the '70s, although it's considerably less pyjama-like and saggy. "He was my favourite character growing up," continues Joe Russo. "I have an incredible amount of passion for Spider-Man. It was very important for us to execute an interpretation of the character that was loyal to how I felt about him as an 11-year-old. So we were very dedicated to casting an actor very close in age to the age of the character. And also, an actor with that youthful spirit and insecurity that comes with being that age and having that kind of power." Post-*Civil War*, this Spider-Man is getting his own movie. Directed by Jon Watts (*Cop Car*), it arrives in summer 2017. **MM**

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The WANDA Years

With Scarlet Witch now a full Avenger, Elizabeth Olsen is entering a new phase of her career. But she's not turning her back on character-focused material, like upcoming musical biopic I Saw The Light. Total Film meets the actress enjoying the best of both worlds.

WORDS MATT MAYTUM **PORTRAIT** MAARTEN DE BOER / CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES

For someone who has just arrived in London off the red-eye from New York, Elizabeth Olsen is refreshingly chirpy. Introducing herself as 'Lizzie', she stands to greet *Total Film* when we meet her in a suite at the Soho Hotel in February, before relaxing back into a red sofa, her smiley demeanour revealing no signs of jetlag. She's in town to talk *Captain America: Civil War*, her second outing in the Marvel Cinematic Universe as Wanda 'Scarlet Witch' Maximoff. After the Sokovian Disaster at the climax of *Age Of Ultron* (which claimed the life of her fleet-footed brother), she's now part of the updated Avengers line-up. "She's just kind of assimilating to a different culture," explains Olsen. "I think there's still an inner struggle of what all of it means exactly. But that, I think, is an ongoing figuring out that we'll discover in the third phase a bit more too."

One of the perks of joining the Avengers – besides official entry into the blockbuster leagues – is a swish new costume, comprising a red leather jacket and corset. "The new costume represents a more functional costume than the end of the last movie – which I could only stand in," she laughs. "And I obviously don't want to be in a leotard and headdress, so I'm happy with the full leather look."

Leaving the superhero garb on set, today she's wearing a black flowery sleeveless dress, with a cosy autumnal wrap that she shrugs on and off of her shoulders during our chat, her shoulder-length blond hair framing her strikingly huge, almost anime-proportioned eyes. Those eyes widen further when she talks about her continued involvement in the MCU, reprising a character for a sequel being a new experience for her. "It feels great," she beams. "I'm actually even more excited to do the third one because... It's a really specific skill working on these movies, one that you don't learn unless you're doing them. And I really felt like a fish out of water for *Ultron*. You're creating these hand movements that have never been established, and you're creating an accent that doesn't exist in the world. But I feel like I keep getting more confident revisiting the character."

Beyond *Civil War*, the two-part *Infinity War* is evidently even more exciting. "I talked with the Russos a little bit about what the plan is for the next one, and it sounds really cool and exciting. But she still has an interesting journey in *Civil War* that kind of kicks off the film." Although she admits that she only grabs snatched pieces of information about the next films from her neighbours Chris Evans and Jeremy Renner (who live nearby), or when she hits the recording booth for Scarlet Witch's ADR.

We might be getting ahead of ourselves calling Olsen by her superhero name, though; while comics fans and film geeks know Wanda by her crimson moniker, she was never *actually* referred to as Scarlet Witch in *Age Of Ultron*. "I know! I didn't even realise that," she muses. "I feel like it might be used in this movie, but I'm not sure because I never clocked it, so I've no idea." Even though she's not a Twitter user herself, she can't contain her delight at one #ScarletWitch related element of *Civil War*'s marketing. "I saw that everyone had their own hashtags and then they had their own little emoji faces. That's like the coolest thing I've ever seen!" she giggles. "I was like,'Oh my God, I'm an emoji!'" >>



Light work: Olsen as Audrey May Williams with Tom Hiddleston's Hank in *I Saw The Light* and (inset right) heating up as Avenger Scarlet Witch.

One week after *Civil War* opens, Olsen stars in another project that's a million miles away from superpowers and promotional emojis. *I Saw The Light*, a biopic of tragic country music star Hank Williams, sees her team up with another Marvel actor, Tom Hiddleston, in a "labour of love" project that couldn't be more different to the superhero epic. "It was right after I had done my first Marvel movie, so it was interesting to hear from his perspective being a part of this system for so long, and for me to be this newbie," she explains. "They were different perspectives."

Calling Hiddleston – who she's been romantically linked to off-screen, but denies a relationship – "a phenomenal actor", Olsen points out that the cast and crew on *I Saw The Light* "became a true close-knit creative family". Playing Audrey Mae Williams, Hank's sometime wife and manager, she had plenty of source material to draw from, scouring the archives including the Williams family's personal photographs and effects that are kept in storage at the Nashville Hall of Fame. There were also early morning radio shows, recreated in the film, that she could listen to. It presented an opportunity to portray a real person who's not particularly well-liked in the annals of history.

"People thought she was very difficult and demanding and wanted to be the centre of attention," she says. "So I tried to think, OK, well, that could be true, but also it's the late 1940s. She was married to an alcoholic and someone who was addicted to painkillers, who was on the road sleeping with other women all the time. So I'm pretty sure she had a reason to be all those things. So I went into that movie trying to defend her legacy, really, because there aren't that many people that do."

The research contributed to a role that was "super-personal" for Olsen. "I think the best thing about watching a film is when you get to watch someone else go through something that you're going through and you have something to relate to," she says, but even with a heavy-going role of this sort, she never gets pretentious about the craft. She speaks honestly about trying to balance being on Audrey's side with how best to tell the story. And even though it's a serious subject, she makes the prep sound fun, not least the southern accent and, erm, unpolished singing voice that Audrey has (Olsen once again worked with her close friend, dialect coach Sarah Shepherd, who also guided her through Wanda's Sokovian drawl). "It was a lot of fun to prep this one," she smiles. "And also to try to figure out how to be not a great singer, but not so bad that it makes Hank Williams look like an idiot... We couldn't make it comical!"

'I don't know what's going on. Why am I only working with actors that are in the Marvel universe?'

Up next is another character piece with another Marvel star – she's starring as a federal agent with Jeremy Renner for *Sicario* screenwriter Taylor Sheridan's directorial debut, *Wind River*. "I don't know what's going on," she laughs. "I keep thinking about that. Why am I only working with actors that are in the Marvel universe? What does that mean?"

Ignoring that apparent rule of only working with fellow MCU players, it seems that Olsen's approach to assessing roles is uncomplicated. Establishing the character, what the other actors will bring to the project, and who the director is surrounded by are all standard factors. "Also, meeting with the director and seeing what the personality is like [*is important*]," she asserts. "I'm a pretty straightforward person, so I kind of need that on set as well." Prior to *Wind River*, she took a nine-month break, during which she got bored at home and became desperate to get back on set. "There are things I wanted to work on I didn't get," she admits. "But then everything else, I didn't really want to work on. So I was just kind of being patient. It's horrifying to be patient, especially with a movie – you never know if it's going to go until you sign a contract."





Raindance, Sundance: Soaked in *Godzilla* and (left) opposite Sarah Paulson in *Martha Marcy May Marlene*.

The 27-year-old Californian broke out in spectacular fashion with her first proper role (besides brief appearances in older siblings Mary-Kate and Ashley's work) in scorching Sundance drama *Martha Marcy May Marlene*, in 2011. Olsen is frank about the fact that, five years ago, she didn't capitalise on that launchpad in the way she might have done with the gift of hindsight. "I didn't really take advantage – like, I was new. That was the first movie I ever had come out. I'd only been working for six months. I didn't understand anything about the business or careers. I just felt like a kid who was lucky to be working. So I don't think I made strategic decisions after that."

While she admits she might have responded to that sort of success differently a year or two

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Secret Weapon

MARVEL STARS ASSEMBLE FOR A WEIGHTY MUSICAL BIOPIC.



I SAW THE LIGHT
STARRING Tom Hiddleston, Elizabeth Olsen
DIRECTOR Marc Abraham
ETA 6 May



ago, no regrets are harboured. "It was the process I had to go through... I also had a hard time believing in hype. I still don't really believe in it. But I also know when to maybe take advantage of some kind of forward momentum now a bit better than I did then."

Talking of momentum, Olsen is certainly powering forwards now. Pre-*Ultron*, she scored a blockbuster hit in *Godzilla*, but even that couldn't quite prepare her for the Marvel juggernaut. "*Godzilla* to me was a balance of doing a big movie with a really artistic director and a really interesting cast, and I [*didn't*] have to do too much with greenscreen stuff," she remembers. "But then with Marvel, it's a whole new experience. Doing these films are just totally different. There's an amazing skill to be learned doing them. I've never really felt like I've had some sort of consistent community as an actor until Marvel, and that feels really cool. I love the group we work with."

Outside of the MCU, she's started to develop her own projects, including a TV series she's hoping will happen in the next couple of years. She's also itching to get back on the stage. While she doesn't see herself directing, the producer role appeals. "I do like being in control of the team that comes together," she says. "Because as an actor, you're just there for the middle part, and to have some control in the middle and the end would be a really amazing luxury. So I'm trying to figure that out a little bit more now that I understand things better."

While a Marvel movie might not allow for a ton of improv or flexibility ("I can't really do that when we have 12 superheroes in a room trying to pick up their cue," she jokes), it has given her some sort of, well, power. "I think it's helped me be able to finance jobs independently, and that really means so much."

With a bucket-list of directors to work with including the likes of Spike Jonze, Charlie Kaufman, Woody Allen and Quentin Tarantino, she's hoping she can have her cake and eat it. "There's always a big fear before you sign onto a big movie where you're like, 'Oh God, will Spike Jonze be interested in me now?'" she laughs. "If people want to work with you, they want to work with you. And if they don't they don't. It's a lot of accepting what you can't control."

As our conversation draws to a close, she exudes the quiet confidence of someone who's very much in control and now knows when to strike while the iron is hot. "Right now, I'm just trying to enjoy myself, really. Right now, I'm really trying to have a good fucking time and love myself," she smiles. "I'm excited to be back [*on a set*] and doing it, and now I don't want to stop. So right now I'm just trying to fit in as much variety as possible before Marvel takes me away for nine months again..." TF

***Captain America: Civil War* opens on 29 April.**
***I Saw The Light* opens on 6 May.**

SUMMER PREVIEW



Secret Weapon

A-LIST STARS SIZZLE IN AN OLD-SCHOOL THRILLER

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R ‘n’ R

Cap and Stark aren’t the only bickering big hitters on the summer roster as Russell Crowe and Ryan Gosling play fast and loose in a fun ’70s buddy comedy. Total Film chills out with The Nice Guys to talk pet names and porn. WORDS JANE CROWTHER

THE NICE GUYS
STARRING Russell Crowe, Ryan Gosling, Matt Bomer, Kim Basinger
DIRECTOR Shane Black
ETA 3 June

Spanky and Mucky-Muck are on press duties. The duo are in adjoining suites at the swish Beverly Hills Hotel in LA on a beautiful spring day in March; one smoking up a storm despite hotel rules, the other opening windows to get ‘the outside in and the inside out’. Yin and yang. They’re here to promote their new movie which sees them as bickering buddies knocking seven bells out of each other and chasing round LA on a mad-cap crime caper. A new cartoon perhaps?

Well, sort of – in the sense that this is probably the most fun you’ve seen heavyweight actors Ryan Gosling and Russell Crowe have on screen in a while. And they do whip up a Looney Tunes-esque chemistry together in Shane Black’s darkly comic love letter to seedy ’70s LA, *The Nice Guys*. Low-rent PI Holland March (Gosling) crosses paths with paid heavy Jackson Healy (Crowe) as they search for a missing girl and stumble into the middle of a porn conspiracy and wide-reaching corruption amid American big business.

And that tangible bond is built on a real-life bromance – as seen with their entertaining banter while presenting at the recent Oscars. So much so that they have nicknames for each other. “I call him Spanky,” smiles Crowe fondly, with a twinkle in his eye, when asked about his co-star. “You probably shouldn’t put that in the article, but he can really make me laugh.” “Mucky-Muck,” ‘Spanky’ nods with a smirk when talking about Crowe, “He has to carry that name around for the rest of his life now...”

So how did we get here? Two actors known for their intensity, commitment and pursuit of veracity relaxing into gleeful physical comedy and tomfoolery? Both, along with producer Joel Silver and writer-director Shane Black, have been, at some point or another, labelled ‘difficult’...

“You’re not talking about really simple people, you’re talking about really complicated people,” shrugs an extremely courteous and loquacious Crowe, sitting at the suite desk as though conducting a job interview and >>



On the hunt: Jackson Healy (Russell Crowe) tries to solve a mystery.

enquiring whether a British journalist shouldn't be brought a cuppa (he assures *Total Film* that he's already 'tea-ed up' on his staple, Yorkshire Tea). "Shane Black's a very complicated and a deeply interesting man. Joel has had some incredible experiences, he's not some sort of cookie cutter producer guy – he's a real impresario producer. I really care, I care about [*the work*]. I don't have my life and then have to turn up to work. I have my work, and my life fits around my work. It's a different attitude towards it. And I'm not a serious person. I laugh and joke around all the time. I'd be laughing and joking around just before I cut your throat in a movie, and the guy whose throat I'm cutting really enjoyed the experience."

But it can't be denied that Crowe has had disagreements with directors, award show producers and fellow actors over the years, and he does confess to taking time to prepare for a role – but don't assume he's the serious, method guy on-set. "I can tell you: any film I'm doing, no matter what the moment, I'm always that actually relaxed guy. I might get into a little vortex sometimes where you might see me sitting off by myself when I'm really examining something. My resting bitch face, as the Americans call it," he laughs and strokes a silver-flecked beard. "But that often creates something in and of itself, because I do like to have a little think about what I'm about to do."

He admits he had a little think about doing *The Nice Guys* initially because, for him, the project rested on the casting of his on-screen wingman. "In the middle of reading a bunch of other stuff, I always had this," he recalls. "If I start making notes on behalf of the character on the first reading, 99 times out of 100 that's the movie I'm doing. So that becomes, 'OK, I have to meet Shane. Who's the other person?' They gave me a sort of list of guys. I was like, 'Hmmm. Well, that's way broader than I thought.' It became a little less interesting. But Shane was already on the way to Australia to see me. We were going to have a conversation about it. He walked in the door, shook my hand, and before he said anything else, he said, 'Ryan Gosling.' I was like, 'Well, *that* is a completely different thing...'"

FUNNY PEOPLE

In the next suite Gosling, dressed in maroon suede bomber jacket, white t-shirt and black jeans, seems more reserved in comparison to Crowe's gregarious storytelling. But he shares the Kiwi's enthusiasm for working together. "Russ has been one of my acting heroes," he says in that trademark quiet drawl. "Everything I've done, he did first. When I did *The Believer*, I watched *Romper Stomper* as a reference. He did







The nice life

What floats Messrs Crowe and Gosling's boats?

Nicest smell?

Russell: Well, babies. A baby's head. Not their back-ends. But at my place in Australia, at night-time, we have Evening Jasmine. Right across the front of the house, just as the sun's going down, it's a really powerful perfume. So I love that. I love the smell of horses...

Ryan: Baby's heads? God, that's bizarre. What's the nicest smell in the world? I think when you realise that it's just your toast burning, and you're not having a seizure.

Nicest place?

Russell: For me, it's where I have my farm. That's the most comfortable place in the world.

Ryan: Home was what I was going to say. Canada might be technically the nicest place in the world. It's the most... nice people, very polite. Maybe I'll say that. We're not saying the happiest, right? We're just saying the nicest.

Nicest drink?

Russell: Currently I'm drinking, in a tall glass with lots of ice, Beluga Gold Line vodka. So two ounces of vodka, two ounces of freshly squeezed pineapple juice, and then two ounces of water. You just mix it together. The water takes the sharpness out of the pineapple juice and just softens it up a little bit. It also helps you with the hangover, the day before. Yes, it's my own [*recipe*]. I'm constantly coming up with a new cocktail, once or twice a year.

Ryan: I think a Shirley Temple is a nice drink. It's not a great drink. I don't even enjoy it, but it seems very *nice*.

Nicest food?

Russell: I'm a very big Asian food fan. Japan, China, Thailand, Vietnam, Korea, Malaysian, Singaporean, Indonesian. You grow up eating that food all the time in Australia. You have that in your palette. My favourite restaurant in the world though, actually, is China Tang in the Dorchester. I just love that restaurant. I like the fact that when you go to the bathroom, Dylan Thomas is reading poetry for you.

Ryan: I guess kale. Kale feels nice, doesn't it? It's the nicest to your body.

TF: We think you're confusing virtuous with nice. If you weren't being good to your body, just eating something nice. Like a cronut...

Ryan: I've never had a cronut. Can we get a couple of cronuts up here? Couple of kale cronuts, please. **JC**



Joining forces: Holland March (Ryan Gosling) and Jackson Healy (Russell Crowe) make a discovery.

Les Mis before I did a musical [*the upcoming* La La Land]... I remember watching him when he went from *Gladiator* to *The Insider*. It kind of blew my mind, as a young actor, that you can make that kind of about-face from role to role. He's always been somebody to me that was a great reference for how to approach something. I always imagined that we would work together in a drama. But when I read this and that he was playing that role, I just thought it was too good to pass up, because what an opportunity to work with him in something where we're both kind of new to the genre. There was no reference really for comedy in him."

'I'm not a serious person. I'll be laughing and joking before I cut your throat in a movie' RUSSELL CROWE

Though Crowe counts Ridley Scott's 2006 flop *A Good Year* as one of his funnybone references ("that's totally Jacques Tati physical comedy all the way through. Whether it was received and understood by critics at the time – which it wasn't – Ridley and I knew what we were doing, and we knew what we were aiming for,"), the brooder behind Bud White, Maximus Decimus Meridius and Robin Hood wouldn't be the first person audiences might think of for a screwballer that Gosling likens to 'a Warner Bros Wile E. Coyote short'. But both men liked the idea that Shane Black had spliced madcap laughs with the more weightier matter of American corporation corruption – not unlike Gosling's recent hit, *The Big Short*.

"Yeah, for such a silly movie, there is a really serious message at the heart of it," nods Gosling. "Shane set out to tell a good detective story and then he allows it to be wild and to go off the rails. That's why it's what I think of as a full experience because it's never just playing one note. There's a lot of plate-spinning. Even though most of them break!" He chortles, "but you start to root for at least one staying intact."

That plate spinning involves March and Healy following the trail of a missing girl, Amelia, to a T&A-filled porn party (with March's saucer-eyed teen daughter in tow), getting into car-crashes and gun-fights, falling off buildings and into swimming pools, getting drunk, drugged, broken... and features some full-throttle physical comedy – Gosling's protracted fight with a toilet door and Crowe's reaction to his on-screen wife's confession being highlights.

"[*Physical comedy*] is something I've always wanted to do," says Gosling, getting more animated and enthusing about his love of Mel Brooks films as a kid. "I always want to add some element of that into what I'm doing; it just never is appropriate. You know, can't do *Blue Valentine* and then do a pratfall, or in *Drive*. Some of those little scenes, like in the bathroom, it takes a lot to figure out how to create the choreography of that. The really fun stuff was the end sequence in the movie where I fall from a roof into a pool, see Richard Nixon at the bottom of the pool, get blown over a car by another explosion, fall through a plate-glass window, hit another car, get steamrolled by a giant linebacker into the >>

side of it, get hit by another car...” He takes a breath. “That took like a week. But the choreography of that was some of the most fun I’ve ever had.”

UP IN SMOKE

While Gosling is the Wile E. Coyote of the film with everything short of an anvil dropping on him (he admits he got ‘loads of injuries’ for his trouble), Crowe is the craftier, cooler roadrunner. Sober to Gosling’s pissed PI, the (relative) straight man to his clown, the abstainer to his human ashtray. Gosling groans and shakes his head when he recalls chain-smoking on set. “I thought it would be fun to get to smoke for the film. But, ugh... I never want to do that ever again – this movie just beat it out of me. It’s kind of a great way to quit. If you can, do a film where you have to smoke because you’ll never want to smoke again after it.”

That ‘fluidity’ is what got producer Joel Silver hopping mad during one night shoot – and landed Gosling his nickname. Having closed a major LA artery to get a relatively easy shot of the two characters discussing a poster for a porn film, Gosling began riffing. “He went off on a tangent about German spank films,” recalls Crowe with glee. “Every time we talked about the poster, he was telling me something different about it. He’s making me laugh. Joel’s standing in the middle of Sunset Boulevard with his hands up in the air, going, ‘Not tonight, guys! I’ve got Sunset Boulevard locked down for our movie!’” He laughs at the memory. “The thing is, one or two takes later, we’ve actually got the exact right temperature.”

“Spanky...” Gosling sighs in mock hurt later. “I don’t want to talk about it.” But he will divulge how Crowe got his sobriquet. “For some reason, the term ‘Mucky Muck’, a line that Shane had written, was just too much for Russ

‘If you can, do a film where you have to smoke because you’ll never want to smoke again after it’ RYAN GOSLING

“It requires, in that particular role, an actor with some dexterity,” Crowe says of his co-star’s commitment to sparking up and falling down. “The thing about Ryan... Probably don’t say this to him, but he’s kind of borderline genius. Working with him is so enjoyable, you never know where you’re going to go. But you just have to be fluid about that. And you can do the same in return. But you know everything will be in a pocket of emotional sincerity. So you know your characters will stay in place, no matter how high the comedy may reach. And that’s as good as it gets in any kind of situation, whether it be a drama or a romance. If you can be working at that level, then fantastic.”

to handle on-set. It took hours to get through the scene because any time the words ‘Mucky Muck’ came up, it just became his Achilles’ heel.”

NICER GUYS?

A period comedy with an original script (co-written by Anthony Bagarozzi) new characters and a generous helping of nudity, swears and violence, *The Nice Guys* is something of a counter-programming alternative to summer’s usual billion-dollar franchise fare. A bit of a gamble in today’s risk-averse cinematic landscape? Though Crowe has dabbled with superheroes in *Man Of Steel* (“I didn’t get a real cape, though. If you don’t get a cape, I don’t



Paired up: March and Healy ponder their investigation.









Investigators: getting embroiled in a murky world as the pair uncover some shocking truths.

think you've really been in a superhero film. I got ripped off!" he laughs), he's sanguine about the push-pull of audience appetite and assured that *The Nice Guys* will offer a cheeky alternative to the perpetual slate of universe films, sequels and reboots.

"It's funny; people are complaining about the market that they've created. Movies go where the dollar is going to be. We're in an environment of huge tent-pole movies. But I don't think the Academy Awards has suffered in any quality over the last decade or 15 years. There's been some magical, beautiful movies made – progressive, cutting-edge stuff. But, those movies don't get an audience at the moment. If there's going to be any credibility in the art form, you have to keep doing it the right way round. And the right way round for me is, if I respond to a writer's work, if I get that feeling on my skin or whatever, that's the movie I'm going to do. I'm respecting the gods of film because I'm using what I do for the right reasons."

A fan of *The Monster Squad*, *Rocky* and *Hudson Hawk*, Gosling thinks that the retro vibe of *The Nice Guys* will do well for the project. "I like those [*tentpole*] films too. I just think films like this... maybe it's nostalgic because I grew up on them, but I miss them. I think they're a lot of fun. I miss my underdog stories. There's a kind of style right now that they're naturally winners, that there's a winning quality to your leads. It's fun to root for underdogs, even though they're flawed."

The Nice Guys finding an audience is one thing, but in a world where good box office often leads to a sequel, might Crowe and Gosling be back for more adventures together? After all a third-reel sign-off suggests there could be more cases to solve for 'The Nice Guys Agency'.

"That's more of an in-joke from all of us," says Crowe. "However, if you said to me, 'You have to go to work again with those three blokes,' I'd be fine with that. But let's see, because here's my belief and understanding: as soon as you mention that there might be a possibility, it just never happens. So you've already killed it by bringing it up. Yeah. You ruined it. It was you."

Gosling seems equally amenable to a re-team. "It was just a joke that we have to take them into the '80s. But I've gotta say, that sounds like fun to me." Maybe one for every era, *TF* suggests? "If we can do one in the '80s and one in the '90s, I think that we'd be pretty lucky to get to do that. As long as people don't get sick of it, we're having a fun time doing it..." TF





END OF days

Oscar Isaac brings the pain in the prequel threequel.

X-MEN: APOCALYPSE
STARRING James McAvoy, Michael Fassbender, Jennifer Lawrence, Oscar Isaac, Olivia Munn
DIRECTOR Bryan Singer
ETA 19 May

Is this the end? Sixteen years in, the X-franchise is finally ready to introduce its most terrifying Big Bad: Apocalypse. Played by Oscar Isaac, this blue-skinned mutant pre-dates the likes of Professor X and Magneto by thousands of years. A god-like figure, he has lain dormant since the days of ancient Egypt. On awaking in 1983 he considers not only the understandable things like deely boppers and Kajagoogoo but *all* human civilisation an abomination – an infestation to be eradicated.

He's more than capable of doing so too, thanks to abilities which seem almost limitless. *X*-writer/producer Simon Kinberg sums it up: "He's arguably the most powerful villain in the history of the *X-Men* comics. No man can stop him. No army can stop him. But people with other powers can..."

On set in Toronto in July 2015, *Total Film* observes as cast and crew film multiple takes of a scene which suggests stopping him will be easier said than done. Newcomer Tye Sheridan, a young Cyclops, turns to look at Xavier, walks forward, and struggles with a deadly impulse to lower his protective glasses. It seems that someone not present in the room is controlling him from a distance...

Between takes, we take the chance to quiz Kinberg about why fans have had to wait so long to meet the *X*-universe's most formidable foe.

"I might have wanted to jump right to it," Kinberg confesses. "I think some of it is that Magneto is such a great character. And it may be that we needed to get to the critical mass of *Days Of Future Past* to feel like the franchise was ready to explode into a larger scale and scope."

For producer Hutch Parker, the time is finally right. "There were a lot of reasons why Apocalypse made sense. I don't believe we could have started with the Apocalypse story. It's more expansive, and more challenging in some ways. The mainstream culture has fully embraced these movies now, and in that expansion has come an acceptance of some tonal territory that would have been too provocative."

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Big Gun

BRYAN SINGER'S MUTANTS FACE THEIR BIGGEST THREAT YET





Master of chaos: Bryan Singer holds things together on set.

As the destruction-laden trailers suggest, this is a movie which dwarfs previous saga entries. "It's a bigger canvas than we've had before", Parker says. "The threats are large and global as opposed to more localised. Apocalypse represents a more expansive threat than we've seen either the X-Men or the world face before. It refreshes the way in which they're challenged; it pushes their faith further; it challenges their relationships more deeply."

While Apocalypse's ancient, god-like point of view is light years from that of Magneto's – an anti-hero we can easily empathise with, having witnessed Erik Lehnsherr's suffering at the hands of humanity – Parker assures us this is no one-dimensional monster.

"The key to great villains is their motivation", Parker says. "Their philosophy has to feel credible, not just evil for evil's sake. Simon and Bryan [*Singer*] have done a brilliant job of taking a character who's so ancient and bringing him into modern times, but with a perspective – almost a commentary on our times – that underpins his belief system and is really the backbone of his agenda."

And if you're worried Apocalypse might turn a franchise renowned for smuggling social issues into blockbuster entertainment into mere demolition porn, Parker has words of reassurance.

"Apocalypse has his point of view about these issues", he explains, "And it forces the characters to make choices, and creates new divisions. So I think you'll find *Apocalypse* is equally thoughtful, and explores those issues dramatically in a similar fashion."

Ian Berriman



BACK IN action

The name's Bourne, Jason Bourne...

JASON BOURNE
STARRING Matt Damon, Alicia Vikander, Vincent Cassel, Tommy Lee Jones
DIRECTOR Paul Greengrass
ETA 29 July

It's been nine years since Jason Bourne crashed and smashed his way into multiplexes in *The Bourne Ultimatum*, and for a while there it looked like star Matt Damon and director Paul Greengrass were done with the franchise: *The Bourne Legacy*, the fourth film in the franchise, introduced fellow spy Aaron Cross (Jeremy Renner) in the hope that audiences would swap their allegiances. A worldwide box office of $276m (*Ultimatum* took $443m) suggested that not enough viewers were willing to make the leap.

Well, guess who's back? And, judging from the 30-second teaser that launched during Super Bowl 50, he's leaner and meaner than ever, with Damon in the best fighting shape of his life as he literally throws himself into fights and motorbike chases.

"I'm thrilled that Paul wanted to do it," Damon tells *Total Film*. "Bourne has been gone for years, so the big questions are, 'Where's he been, what's he been up to, and why has he come back?' We didn't want a movie until we could answer those things."

Just how Damon and Greengrass, who both penned the script along with fellow series stalwart Christopher Rouse, choose to answer these things is not yet open to scrutiny – the plot is classified. We do know, however, that the frantic action will be firmly entrenched in a world that speaks to the financial meltdowns of the past few years, and there's also the guarantee of a post-Edward Snowden vibe, which makes sense given *Ultimatum* saw an off-the-grid Bourne blowing the whistle on the Treadstone program that created him.

"So much has changed in the world since 2007, especially in the intelligence sphere, so the character can definitely speak to that stuff," nods Damon.

If that's not enough to excite you, there's also the return of Julia Stiles as Nicky Parsons, plus new franchise faces Alicia Vikander, Vincent Cassel and Tommy Lee Jones (if he of the saddlebag visage can ever be described as a 'new face'). Best of all, though, is the promise of the biggest and fiercest action sequences in the series thus far – cars flip, Las Vegas' strip comes in for a serious pummelling, and Bourne is rougher and readier than ever. "I'm 45 – it's much, much harder [*to get into shape*]," smirks Damon. "I turned 30 on the first one."

So, now that Bourne is back with a vengeance, can we expect future assignments... and perhaps even that long-rumoured team-up between Bourne and Cross? "I don't know," Damon shrugs. "Jeremy is one of my favourite actors working, so the idea is really exciting. If there was an organic way that those characters could come together..." He laughs. "Never say never." **Jamie Graham**

Big Gun

DAMON AND GREENGRASS RETURN FOR THE FIFTH INSTALMENT OF THE SUPERSPY FRANCHISE

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TROUBLE agent

High school reunion.

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
STARRING Dwayne Johnson, Kevin Hart, Aaron Paul, Amy Ryan
DIRECTOR Rawson Marshall Thurber
ETA 1 July

"Initially, the idea was not Dwayne and Kevin at all," explains director Rawson Marshall Thurber, telling *Total Film* how *Central Intelligence* came to be. "The original joke was that Dwayne's character was actually just a high-school loser who didn't really change much. And he comes back to the reunion and you find out he works for the CIA. So the joke was sort of 'fat Jason Bourne'. Imagine Chris Farley playing him: that was the joke. It was a good joke, but not the one that we went with."

What Thurber opted for instead was the story of Bob, a bullied, overweight kid who transforms himself into a Dwayne Johnson-shaped CIA super-agent post-high school. In the meantime, Kevin Hart's former 'coolest kid in school' has gone on to lead the thrill-free life of an accountant, until a chance meeting at the reunion suddenly makes him a key part in Bob's latest mission.

When the artist formerly known as The Rock came on board, suddenly it all made sense. "When Dwayne expressed interest, a big, giant cartoon light bulb went off over the top of my head," says Thurber. "I'm like, 'Oh, of course. This makes perfect sense [*that*] if someone was bullied in high-school, they would transform themselves into The Rock, into this literal superhero.'"

And when it came to casting the other piece of the buddy-movie puzzle, Hart fit the bill, although the action hero/funny guy dynamic isn't going to play out quite as you might expect from seeing that pairing (of a 'little Hart' and a 'big Johnson', as the tagline superbly puts it) on paper. Impressed by Johnson's comedy chops on *Saturday Night Live*, Thurber was disappointed that the former WWE wrestler doesn't often get to show off that side of himself on the big screen. "One of the things I'm most proud of in this movie is that we took the biggest action star in the world and made him the funny guy," says Thurber. "And we took one of the funniest people in the world and made him the straight man." Although, the director is quick to point out that despite occupying the 'straight' role, Hart still gets laughs all throughout the movie ("I mean, he is literally a human joke machine.")

A huge *Beverly Hills Cop* fan, Thurber, who's better known for his comedies (*Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story*, *We're The Millers*) is aiming to balance the laughs with the explosions. "This is not a comedy with a little bit of action, and it's not an action movie with a little bit of [*laughter*]... If you like action-comedy, this is that, right down the middle. If you're on your Netflix queue and type in action comedy, this would be on the top of the list. I hope. Eventually!" With films not based on existing characters and ideas rarer and rarer in the crowded summer schedule, an untested property is always going to be a harder sell than a big comic-book dust-up. But, given its crowd-pleasing genre and Thurber, Johnson and Hart's enviable box-office track records, *Central Intelligence* might turn out to be one of summer's smartest bets. **Matt Maytum**



Secret Weapon

TWO STARS WITH PROVEN BOX-OFFICE CLOUT COULD DELIVER A SURPRISE HIT

Brains and brawn: Dwayne Johnson and Kevin Hart team up for an equal dose of laughs and blasts.



Big Gun

THE KING OF THE JUNGLE SETS HIS SIGHTS ON THE BOX-OFFICE CROWN

JUNGLE fever

Alexander Skarsgård's Lord Of The Apes swings into action.





Returning home: (above) Tarzan in the jungle; (bottom) Jane (Margot Robbie).

THE LEGEND OF TARZAN
STARRING Alexander Skarsgård, Margot Robbie, Christoph Waltz
DIRECTOR David Yates
ETA 1 July

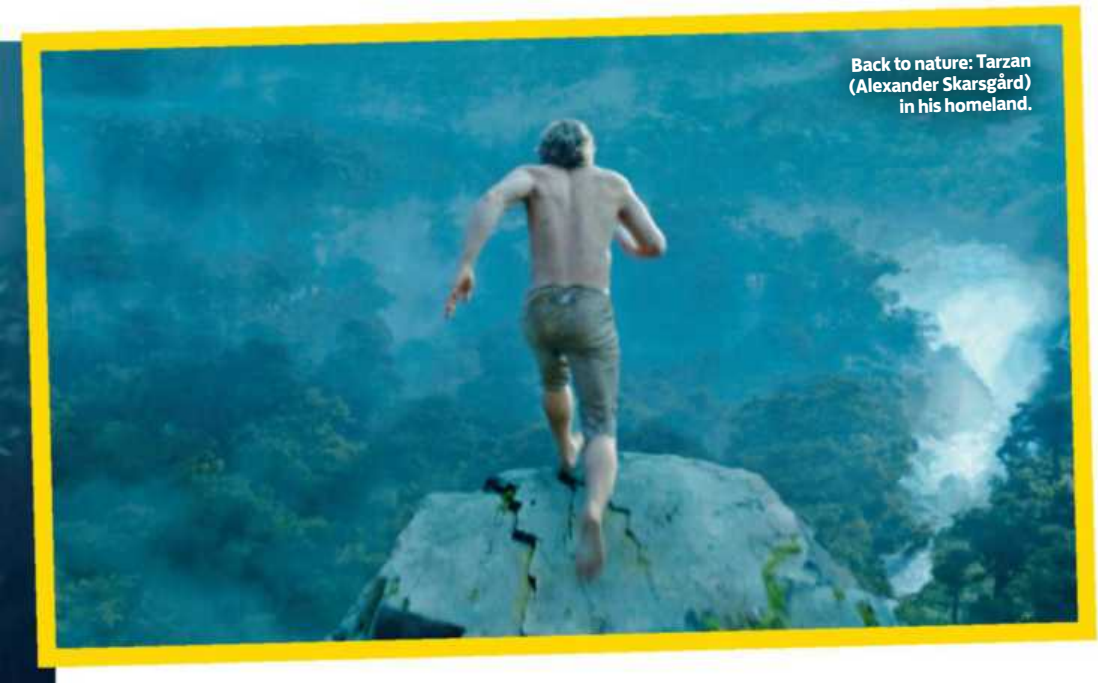
With over 50 films to his name, few characters can rival the cinematic footprint of Edgar Rice Burroughs' pulp hero Tarzan. The loincloth-clad king of the jungle has done it all – from the silent serials of the '20s to Disney's '99 animation. But unlike most Tarzan tales, which seek to tame the ape-raised wild man by transporting him from his verdant homeland to tea-sipping civilisation, *The Legend Of Tarzan* operates in reverse and sees Alexander Skarsgård's abtastic vine-swinger return to the Congo after living in London as gentrified nobleman John Clayton III for almost a decade.

"What was so interesting about this and what made it different was, on page one, he's not in the jungle and not wearing a loincloth. He's drinking tea with the Prime Minister in a buttoned-up Victorian England – very polite and proper," a similarly courteous Alexander Skarsgård tells *Total Film*. "Instead of all those old movies where it's about taming the beast, it's about releasing the beast."

More than a decade in the making itself, *The Legend Of Tarzan*'s production has seen Guillermo del Toro, Stephen Sommers, Craig Brewer and a veritable tribe of writers come and go over the years, until director David Yates chose the film as his first post-*Potter* project. In a move mirroring the casting of Olympic swimmer Johnny Weissmuller as Tarzan in the 1930s, flipper-footed athlete Michael Phelps was also rumoured to make his showbiz debut in the film, before Yates settled on *True Blood*'s enigmatic master vamp Alexander Skarsgård.

Hulking 6'4" frame aside, Skarsgård was an ideal fit for the hero torn between worlds

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Back to nature: Tarzan (Alexander Skarsgård) in his homeland.







Raised by apes: (top to bottom) as a baby; in London; apes on the lookout; (below) Captain Rom (Christoph Waltz).



‘Instead of the old movies where it’s about taming the beast, this is about releasing the beast’ ALEXANDER SKARSGÅRD

precisely because the Swedish-born Hollywood star has his own divided geographical loyalties. “He has this wonderful quality of not belonging to one or the other,” Yates told *USA Today*, an assertion Skarsgård seems a touch concerned about when *TF* puts it to him. “I’ve got to talk to my shrink about this!” he laughs. “No, he’s probably right. I grew up in Stockholm; that said America’s been my home for a very long time... Somewhere in the middle of Iceland, maybe?”

Tarzan’s latest legend may kick off in Victorian London, but the action quickly moves to the plains of Africa when the king of the swingers is invited home as an emissary of Parliament alongside Samuel L. Jackson’s gun-toting American George Washington Williams. But Tarzan is little more than a pawn in the masterplan of Christoph Waltz’s calculating Captain Rom, a plan involving a tribal leader with a personal debt to settle and the historically inspired occupation of the Congo by Belgian King Leopold II. Also along for the ride, of course, is Tarzan’s true love Jane Porter, played by Margot Robbie. But Robbie had no interest in her Jane being another prototypical screaming dame.

“I wanted her to be fiercely independent,” Robbie explains. “I wanted her to be incredibly defiant, almost to a fault sometimes, and cool under pressure. She’s incredibly strong and grounded. I wanted that to be evident when she was in situations of danger.” With a budget equal to this summer’s city-levelling superhero smackdowns, Tarzan is set to offer the kind of spectacle almost a century of big-screen adaptations could only dream of, with vertiginous swinging to rival *Spider-Man* and ape scraps that make Leo’s ursine brawl in *The Revenant* look like a bear hug.

Describing it as “an epic action-adventure film, with an epic love story at the heart of it” Robbie was most impressed by *Potter* production designer Stuart Craig’s awe-inspiring sets. “In the back lot of Leavesden they built a jungle, a 90ft boat, a river for the boat to go in, a colonial town, a waterfall that really has tons and tons of water coming out every second. It was the most insane thing I’ve ever seen.” And for someone who’s spent the last year snuggling up to The Joker, that’s saying something. **Jordan Farley**



AUSTEN powers

Whit Stillman reunites with his Last Days Of Disco ladies, not to mention Jane Austen, for the summer's most sophisticated treat.

LOVE & FRIENDSHIP
STARRING Kate Beckinsale, Chloë Sevigny, Xavier Samuel, Stephen Fry
DIRECTOR Whit Stillman
ETA 27 May

In 1998, disco was king – at least in cinemas. Todd Haynes' *Velvet Goldmine* and Mark Christopher's *54* both dug out the sequins and the glitter. And then there was *The Last Days Of Disco*, Whit Stillman's early-'80s tale of two Ivy League grads dancing the night away in Manhattan clubs, starring Kate Beckinsale and Chloë Sevigny. Eighteen years later, this trio are back for the most unlikely of reunions in the aptly-titled, *Love & Friendship*. "Who else does that?" grins Beckinsale.

In the interim, the British actress' career exploded with *Pearl Harbor* and the *Underworld* franchise while Sevigny carried on cramming cool indies onto her CV, from *American Psycho* to *Boys Don't Cry*. And Stillman? He spent 13 years in the wilderness before returning with 2011's *Damsels In Distress*, an off-beat tale of college girls starring Greta Gerwig. Suddenly, Stillman is no longer stationary. "It feels like I'm back from the dead," he says, wryly.



Not only that but he's arguably back with his best film since his acclaimed 1990 debut, *Metropolitan*, the acutely-observed tale of Manhattan debutants that saw him nominated for an Oscar for Best Original Screenplay. His first adaptation to make it to the screen, the 18th Century-set *Love & Friendship* is a withering comedy-of-manners based on *Lady Susan*, the 'unfinished' novella by Jane Austen that was published posthumously in 1871, long after the author's death.

LADY LUCK

Despite Stillman abandoning the book's epistolary structure, "the source material and the movie are very, very close," says Beckinsale, who plays the recently widowed Lady Susan Vernon, a born survivor who ingratiates herself with her in-laws in the hope of finding husbands for herself, and her meek daughter Frederica (Morfydd Clark). "I like her because she gets the ball in the air" smiles Stillman. "She gets things going, she makes things happen."

Compare her to *Pride And Prejudice*'s Elizabeth Bennet or *Mansfield Park*'s Fanny Price, Austen's better-known heroines, and it's a revelation. "She's a really quite major antihero," says Beckinsale. "Usually, if there is a sexually rapacious woman in literature of the time, she ends up dying of something – burnt alive. That's what we're used to. Certainly, there's always a bit of a sticky end to those women. But Lady Susan sails off getting everything she wants, which is really quite refreshing."

Adding to this effervescence is the brilliant comic performance of Tom Bennett as Sir James Martin, a well-meaning dumbbell Lady Susan is determined to foist onto her daughter. Calling Bennett "the British version of Will Ferrell", Stillman adds, "It's made the film very appealing for guys. This is the 'guy' Jane Austen film. There's a lot of male sketch comedy built into it around the edges, so it's not just funny, outrageous Kate Beckinsale as Lady Susan all the time." He pauses. "Though that's pretty appealing too... she's easy on the eyes!"



Since the film premiered at Sundance, the reviews for the 42-year-old Beckinsale have been stellar. "It's certainly one of the best roles I've been given," she admits. "It's an absolutely gorgeous part and I, perhaps, have been holding machine-guns for so long that people have forgotten that this is something I can actually do." Indeed, post-*Underworld*, it's easy to overlook Beckinsale's turn in the 1995 "Jane Austen-derived" *Cold Comfort Farm* that inspired Stillman to write her *Disco*'s bossy Charlotte, or that she played Austen's Emma Woodhouse in a TV miniseries a year later.

Back then, she hadn't been to America for more than three days – "and I think two of

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Secret Weapon

A CAREER BEST KATE BECKINSALE BRINGS OUT THE FUNNY IN JANE AUSTEN



Friends reunited: Kate Beckinsale (right) and Chloë Sevigny.

‘I’ve been holding machine-guns for so long that people have forgotten this is something I can do’ KATE BECKINSALE

them were in Disneyland when I was nine!” So arriving for *Disco* was a baptism of fire, not least immersing in a “very specific stratum of American society” and picking up the East Coast accent. “I was such a fish-out-of-water... so I spent my time madly eavesdropping Chloë and following her around. I didn’t have to do that this time.” Relocating to chilly Ireland, “There we were again, best friends – rather more weathered; this time on my turf.”

Reuniting with Sevigny, who plays Lady Susan’s American confidante Mrs. Alicia Johnson, was simply a hoot. “She’s such a unique person,” says Beckinsale, “interesting, cool and with her own very particular style. It was just suddenly all very familiar – but we did a bit less disco dancing.” Given the costumes – beautifully designed by Eimer Ni Mhaoldomhnaigh, who previously worked on Austen bio *Becoming Jane* – that’s hardly a surprise. “It was quite hard to get through doorways, let alone bust moves!”

While Sevigny was cast first – there was a brief flirtation with Sienna Miller for Lady Susan – in Stillman’s mind it was always to be “a Chloë-Kate reunion”, he says. “They were super-palsy during the shoot, almost too much so from the production’s stand-point. I think they enjoyed being together. They work very well together. They play very well together.” But the on-screen dynamic was changed from *Disco*. “It’s very different in that they’re allies this time. And that’s important.”

For Stillman, it was the chance to put his stamp on one of his favourite authors (*Metropolitan*’s Audrey, an Austen fan, was a “modern stand-in” for Fanny Price, he says). *Lady Susan*, however, is not well-known. “There are big Jane Austen fans who haven’t read it,” he says, which, in a world drowning in repeated takes on *Pride And Prejudice* (most recently with zombies), is rather refreshing. “We’re the first people to have played these characters,” laughs Beckinsale. “To be groundbreaking in Jane Austen is pretty exciting.” **James Mottram**

WHO SCARES wins

Big Gun

ONE OF THE '80S FAVOURITE FRANCHISES GETS A NEW LEASE OF (AFTER) LIFE...

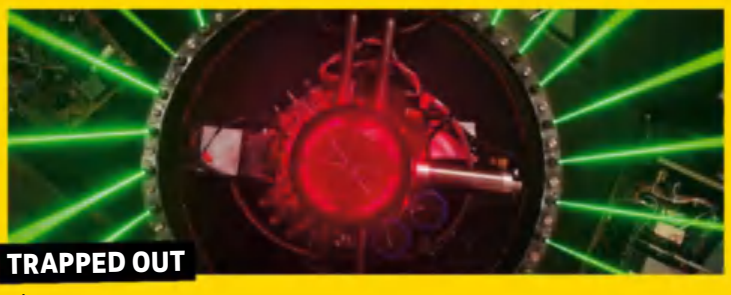
Breaking down the trailer of the reinvigorated **Ghostbusters**.

STARRING Kristen Wiig, Melissa McCarthy, Leslie Jones, Kate McKinnon **DIRECTOR** Paul Feig **ETA** 15 July



GLOOPY GHOSTS

In what appears to be the team's first paranormal encounter, professor Erin Gilbert (Kristen Wiig) approaches a glowy ghoul before taking a torrent of 'busters goo full in the face. "That stuff went everywhere," she tells her mates.



TRAPPED OUT

It's been 30 years since Bill Murray and co first pulled on their proton packs so the tech's due a bit of an upgrade. Thanks to "brilliant engineer" Jillian Holtzmann (Kate McKinnon), we'll be getting new gadgets like this laser-powered trap.



GIRL CRUSH

Speaking of, is McKinnon going to steal the show? Her dazzling array of comedy expressions have already sent Twitter into meltdown ("My sexuality = Kate McKinnon winking" tweeted one fan). Her A-list compadres have competition...



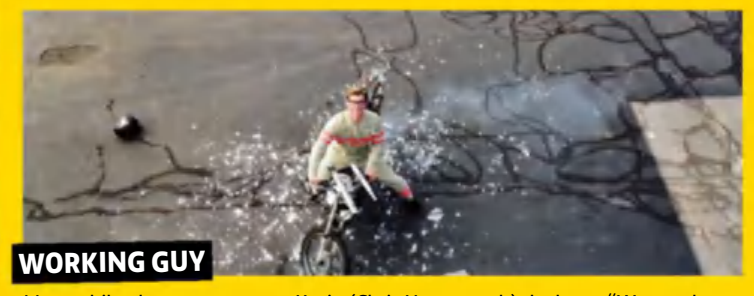
PATTY PARTY

Patty Tolan (Leslie Jones) is the subway worker whose NYC nous makes her an invaluable addition to the team. With the character yelling things like "I'm mad as hell!" and "The power of Patty compels you," could she also be a celluloid nut?



AMPING UP

With the 'busters assembled by spooks expert Abby Yates (Melissa McCarthy), they quickly discover somebody is "amplifying paranormal activity". Cue an explosion of spooks in what looks like one of the film's coolest set-pieces.



WORKING GUY

Meanwhile, dreamy secretary Kevin (Chris Hemsworth) declares: "We need to build something to fight these damn ghosts." He promptly hops onto motorcycle Ecto-2, suggesting he'll be anything but deskbound in the film.



SLIME TIME

While Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Ernie Hudson and Sigourney Weaver all cameo, it really wouldn't be *Ghostbusters* without Slimer. He's one of the reboot's many spooks, which all boast the glowy 'busters aesthetic of yesteryear. Ah, nostalgia.



TIME SQUARED

What's this? A blink-miss shot suggests the ladies could find themselves in the '70s – check out the Times Square billboards for *Taxi Driver* and *The Isle Of The Snake People*, hinting there might be a time-travel element to the reboot... **JW**



FUNNY business

Melissa McCarthy goes back to her improv roots.

Secret Weapon
THE GHOSTBUSTERS FUNNYWOMAN LINES UP ANOTHER BLAST FROM THE PAST

THE BOSS
STARRING Melissa McCarthy, Kristen Bell, Peter Dinklage, Kathy Bates
DIRECTOR Ben Falcone
ETA 10 June

"We spent months writing and rewriting the lines... We squeezed each joke within an inch of its life to make it perfect... And then Melissa gets on set and starts doing something completely different." Ben Falcone has every reason to sound frustrated – it's hard enough directing an improv-prone Melissa McCarthy in a role she's been developing for years, but that job's even harder when you're married to her.

Back working with his wife after 2014's road-trip comedy *Tammy*, Falcone is bringing McCarthy's old sketch troupe character out of retirement for *The Boss* – the film that casts her as a toppled business mogul trying to claw her way back to the top via the Girl Scouts' door-to-door cookie racket.

"This is a character Melissa developed at The Groundlings, which is the improv theatre where we met in Los Angeles," says Falcone. "After *Tammy* we were thinking about what to do next and we both kept coming back to this crazy tycoon, Michelle Darnell."

Looking like a frightening mix of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton ("That was *not* our intention..."), Darnell is riding high on her billion-dollar empire when she gets sent down for insider trading. Getting out of prison with a reputation to rebuild, she moves in with her ex-PA (Kristen Bell) and sets her sights on the Brownies – resulting in a kid-on-kid street-brawl, an epic swordfight with Peter Dinklage and one colossal set-piece that sees McCarthy hoisted above a stadium on a giant flaming bird.

"Most of your job as a director is just answering questions all day," laughs Falcone, mulling over the big differences between his debut film and *The Boss*. "You turn up and someone comes up and asks what kind of forks you want in the cutlery drawer. But on *Tammy* I was mostly just shooting a couple of people in a car. I never had to deal with anybody flying around on a golden flaming phoenix..."

With McCarthy getting the chance to distance herself from her old stereotypes and flout her nasty streak (punching children, making children cry, spiking children's drinks, puppeteering Kristen Bell's breasts...), it's easy to see why she's been desperate to bring *The Boss* to the screen for such a long time.

"Even when she's at the height of her arrogance and cockiness and brashness, Darnell is someone you still want to sit down and have a drink with," laughs Falcone, who still relished the opportunity to cameo as an accountant who gets to call his wife "a stupid ginger" – albeit before getting hit in the throat with a tennis ball.

"The one thing that keeps our marriage going so strong is the fact that she gets to hit me with things," he sighs. "Every movie we've been in together, she hits me in the face. And she hits *hard*." **Paul Bradshaw**



FOOD FOR thought

Sweary laughs are on the menu...

SAUSAGE PARTY
STARRING Seth Rogen, Kristen Wiig, James Franco, Jonah Hill, Paul Rudd
DIRECTORS Greg Tiernan, Conrad Vernon
ETA 12 August

From Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg comes the first R-rated CG-animation movie, about a supermarket sausage, Frank (Rogen), who discovers the truth about how he came to be – and the fate that awaits him (and all his food-buddy friends) upon leaving the supermarket. Said fate is not, of course, a blissful journey to the nirvana of 'The Great Beyond' as all food stuffs believe, but rather a massacre of slicing, dicing, boiling and frying before being devoured.

With a work-in-progress print screened at SXSW in March, it's fair to say that we can expect *Sausage Party* to be the swearest toon since *South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut*, while it also fizzes with a plethora of wildly inappropriate sex gags and a penchant for turning racial and cultural stereotypes on their heads. Well, what do you expect from the guys who made *The Interview*? And so we have Edward Norton's Jewish bagel clashing with David Krumholtz's Arabic flatbread...

"People like to project their emotions on to the things around them – their toys, their

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ALL AT sea

Director Andrew Stanton charts new waters.

Big Gun

THE LONG-ANTICIPATED SEQUEL TO ONE OF PIXAR'S BEST-LOVED HITS

FINDING DORY
STARRING Ellen DeGeneres, Albert Brooks, Idris Elba, Diane Keaton
DIRECTORS Andrew Stanton, Angus MacLane *(co-director)*
ETA 29 July

Few Pixar films are so revered as director Andrew Stanton's *Finding Nemo*, the first of the studio's movies to win the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature. The tale of an overprotective clownfish who journeys across the ocean in search of his lost son, *Nemo* was the second highest grossing film of 2003 and remains, to this day, the best-selling DVD of all time. Stanton – who went on to direct Pixar's *WALL·E* and Disney's live-action *John Carter* – never planned to make a sequel. Yet revisiting his big-screen debut years after its release, he found himself preoccupied with one question: what happened to Dory's parents?

As voiced by comedian Ellen DeGeneres, the regal blue tang with short-term memory issues was *Nemo*'s breakout character. And audiences will be relieved to hear that, after helping Marlin find his son, she too now has a chance to reunite with her family in *Finding Dory*, a sequel that Stanton calls "a perfect compliment" to its predecessor.

The filmmaker sits down to chat with *Total Film* in a hotel across the street from the famed Monterey Bay Aquarium (where, as the "Monterey Marine Life Institute," much of *Dory* takes place). "There's a structure to the storytelling of *Finding Dory*," he says, "that ended up being somewhat the inverse of the structure of the telling of the first one. So in a weird way they feel complimentary as opposed to a copy of each other. Which was very comforting. It kind of meant that there was a natural, organic extension to it. Which is what you want. You want it to feel like it's its own thing. It's like if you and your spouse have another kid. It's not exactly the same kid, but it's from the same parents."

Stanton's new baby finds Albert Brooks and Willem Dafoe also returning to their roles of Marlin and Gill, and Stanton himself reprises everyone's favourite sea turtle, Crush. They're joined this time around by Hayden Rolence as Nemo, *It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia*'s Kaitlin Olson as a whale shark named Destiny, and *Modern Family*'s Ty Burrell and Ed O'Neill as, respectively, a beluga whale named Bailey and a cranky seven-armed octopus (or "septipus") named Hank, who serves as Dory's sidekick in her quest.

Regarding the seismic jump in Pixar's rendering technology between the two films, producer Lindsey Collins, also a veteran of *Nemo*, remarks, "Hopefully what audiences will feel like is they are just back in the world of *Nemo*, but it will feel that there's a richness to it and a freedom to it. It's less restrictive in terms of what we can and can't do."

"Story dictates the environment," explains Stanton. "It's not told from a spectacle point of view. You can feel when movies are made for those reasons, and they're very flat and false. I just wanted to say, 'Where has a small fish gone that we haven't?' I'm hoping you're gonna [*see*] that from the beginning of the movie to the end."

Joseph McCabe

cars, their pets," Rogen told viewers at SXSW. "That's what Pixar's done for the last 20 years. So we thought: 'What would it be like if our food had feelings?' We quickly realised that it would be fucked up."

As if watching pixel-perfect characters drop constant f-bombs isn't funny enough regardless, the voice cast is a who's who of comic talent to ensure every filthy jest elicits maximum guffaws: Jonah Hill, James Franco, Michael Cera, Bill Hader, Danny McBride and Salma Hayek are all on supporting-larynx duties, while Kristen Wiig co-stars as the bun that Rogen's sausage is desperate to slide into.

Jamie Graham



Secret Weapon

WHO CAN RESIST SEEING SETH ROGEN AND PALS GETTING ANIMATED?



The FIGHT Stuff

Captain America star Frank Grillo gets tough in his *other* big threequel this summer...

THE PURGE: ELECTION YEAR
STARRING Frank Grillo, Elizabeth Mitchell
DIRECTOR James DeMonaco
ETA 15 July

If you're looking for a bodyguard, you could do worse than hiring Frank Grillo. The star of *The Purge: Election Year* – third film in the lean, mean action franchise – knows a thing or two about fighting dirty. While *The Purge: Anarchy* tipped his granite-jawed hero – referred to only as 'Sergeant' – into the waking nightmare of a futuristic 'Purge', in which all crime is legal in America for 12 hours, *The Purge: Election Year* truly pushed him to his limits.

"There's a serious fight sequence I have that goes on for about seven or eight minutes," the 50-year-old actor reveals, speaking with all the insouciance of a guy accustomed to a cinematic scrap or 12. "I got some serious bumps and bruises from that. There were missed punches. We're not supposed to get punched in the face; I was getting punched in the face... I had a loose tooth, it was very physical."

Not that he cried himself to sleep afterwards. "Oh, I loved it," Grillo enthuses. "I box often, so I'm used to getting punched in the face." Business as usual for Grillo, then, but things have moved on a bit for Sergeant in the two years since *The Purge: Anarchy* (that film saw him embarking on a vengeful rampage to kill the man responsible for his son's death). Having discovered the fight's much bigger than petty vendettas, Sergeant's buried the past and returned to duty, protecting a US senator (Elizabeth Mitchell) who'll abolish the Purge if she's elected – and survives Purge night.

"You see this guy who's now kind of clean-shaven, hair combed, wearing a suit," Grillo reveals, explaining that Sergeant's *Death Wish*-style *Anarchy* togs are now a memory. "He is affected deeply by what he sees and experiences, then he goes back to what he was doing before, which was law enforcement." He chuckles. "He starts out in a suit but it gets rumpled very quickly!"

That won't come as much of a surprise to those following the franchise. Dreamt up by series director James DeMonaco, 2013's *The Purge* established the ticking time-bomb concept ("it's always a race against time," nods Grillo), but sequel *The Purge: Anarchy* abandoned its single-location scares for something genuinely bruising. And, not unlike HBO's *The Wire*, the series excels at gradually pulling the focus on its world, subtly revealing the machinations of this chillingly authoritarian America. According to Grillo, this is one action franchise that couldn't be more timely.

"We're really not that far away from some type of a Purge," he muses. "You listen to Donald Trump talk about building a wall around Mexico, throwing all of the immigrants out of the country... It's really not that far from what the idea of the Purge was." As before, *The Purge: Election Year* – which Grillo reveals takes a *Three Days Of The Condor* kind of approach to the scenario – revs reality to a crashing extreme. "The Purge is being used by these rich, white Republican politicians to get rid of the poor," says Grillo.

"Listen, is it high art?" he adds with a knowing grin. "No. Will it go down in history as an important film in cinema? I don't know. Is it entertaining and thought-provoking? Yes. It's a fun 90 minutes!" Well, fun for us – Grillo's the one who had to endure six weeks of night shooting in Rhode Island. "You start to lose your mind a little bit," he reveals. "It's actually a very interesting study in sleep deprivation." If anybody can handle it, though, this guy can. **Josh Winning**

Secret Weapon

THE GRITTY FRANCHISE HAS BECOME A GENUINE SLEEPER SUCCESS

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SUICIDE SQUAD

Which character are you?

Crazed killer or conflicted anti-hero? Select your Squad scoundrel below...

STARRING Jared Leto, Margot Robbie, Will Smith, Cara Delevingne **DIRECTOR** David Ayer **ETA** 5 August

Big Gun

THE COOLEST VILLAINS IN COMICS ARE THE NEXT STEP IN THE EXPANDED JUSTICE LEAGUE UNIVERSE

WORDS **MATT LOOKER**

START

DO YOU USE SUPER-NATURAL POWERS?

YES

IS THAT BECAUSE YOU GOT POSSESSED BY A DEMON?

YES

All-powerful

One that plays with fire

AN ALL-POWERFUL SORCERESS DEMON, OR ONE THAT PLAYS WITH FIRE?

YOU ARE ENCHANTRESS

NO

DO YOU HAVE POWERS YOURSELF OR JUST A MAGIC SWORD

I have powers myself

I just have a magic sword

YOU ARE EL DIABLO

YOU ARE KATANA

NO

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS?

YES

BUT MORALLY DUBIOUS?

YES

YOU ARE AMANDA WALLER

NO

IS THAT BECAUSE YOU ARE CRIMINALLY INSANE?

YES

KNOW ANY KILLER JOKES?

YES

Yes but I prefer a baseball bat

YOU ARE HARLEY QUINN

NO

ARE YOU HIGHLY SKILLED WITH AN IMPRACTICAL CHOICE OF WEAPON?

YES

No just lots of guns

YOU ARE DEADSHOT

ROPES OR BOOMERANGS?

Ropes

YOU ARE SLIPKNOT

Boomerang

YOU ARE BOOMERANG

YOU ARE THE JOKER

NO

YES

YOU ARE RICK FLAG

NO

LET US REPHRASE THAT: DO YOU DRESS UP AS A CREATURE OF THE NIGHT?

YES

YOU ARE BATMAN

NO

WAIT, IS YOUR 'POWER' SUPERHUMAN SCALY SKIN?

YES

YOU ARE KILLER CROC

NO

YOU ARE DEADPOOL

(OI, YOU DON'T BELONG HERE! STOP BREAKING THE FOURTH WALL OF OUR FEATURE!)



SUMMER PREVIEW

PRACTICAL magic

The sequel with plenty of new tricks up its sleeve.

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Secret Weapon

FOLLOWING AN UNDER-THE-RADAR HIT, THE SEQUEL PACKS IN EVEN MORE STAR POWER

NOW YOU SEE ME 2
STARRING Jesse Eisenberg, Woody Harrelson, Mark Ruffalo, Daniel Radcliffe, Lizzy Caplan, Michael Caine, Morgan Freeman
DIRECTOR Jon M. Chu
ETA 8 July

The last time we saw The Four Horsemen, we didn't see them at all. Having flung themselves off a skyscraper in a shower of money, *Now You See Me*'s all-star magic gang vanished at the end of the first movie after pulling the ultimate switcheroo on Morgan Freeman's devious benefactor, Mark Ruffalo's FBI employers and us – the audience who spent most of the film thinking we actually knew what we were watching.

Reappearing for Part 2, the Horsemen are back on stage – but this time we're right up there with them. "The first movie was sort of a big magic show for the audience, but now you're going to get to be on the other side of the curtain," explains Jon M. Chu (*G.I. Joe: Retaliation*), stepping in to replace departing director Louis Leterrier. "The trick is on our magicians this time and they're the ones that need to get out of the box."

Set a few years after the Robin Hood heroics in Las Vegas, the gang are still in hiding, still squabbling over who should be frontman and still bored of biding their time for a comeback. Any thoughts of following up their lead on the shadowy secret society known as 'The Eye' are shelved again when a dangerous new backer starts playing them at their own game – putting them on the receiving end of an elaborate, mind-melting game of entrapment.

"No one would have gotten involved if this was just another sequel," explains Chu. "But this is the complete reverse of the first movie. In the first one they're sort of forced together, and now they have to choose to be together. And as soon as that happens, we throw a few more characters into the mix to really shake things up..."

Freeman and Ruffalo are re-joined by Jesse Eisenberg, Woody Harrelson, Dave Franco and Michael Caine – with Lizzy Caplan's geek-magician replacing Isla Fischer's escapologist, and Daniel Radcliffe stepping in to add even more weight to the hefty cast list.



Magic touch: Walter (Daniel Radcliffe) lays his cards on the table for the crew of conjuring criminals.

PHOTOGRAPHY JAY MAIDMENT



"Weirdly, Daniel plays a guy who's horrible at magic," laughs Chu of Radcliffe's anti-Potter tech-head, a young tycoon who backs the Horsemen into a heist and ends up fighting the gang across two continents in a magic battle royale. "He's someone who's been burnt by magic and has turned to technology instead. He also loves to explain how he does everything, which is pretty much the opposite of what a magician is supposed to do. So it's a fun perspective, and Daniel comes in and completely owns it. He's just delicious in this role."

With the whole cast refining the hard-earned skills they trained for on the first movie (Franco can apparently slice a banana from across the room with a playing card, Eisenberg pulls off a mean sleight of hand and "Woody has never stopped being a mentalist...."), The Horsemen are set for a colossal comeback that's aiming to up the ante again with its *real* magic set-pieces. Promising fire-fights, frozen rain, a hall of mirrors and Jesse Eisenberg melting into the London pavement – *Now You See Me 2* called for a lot of practical problem-solving from Chu and the on-set magic consultants.

SORCERER'S APPRENTICES

"The whole point of magic is that you see that it's not a trick," says Chu. "We all know that you can do anything with CG, but if you start to do that, your audience just checks out. So we tried to do as much as we possibly could for real. I'd say 85 per cent of the movie is practical stuff – real, actual magic tricks. When you watch the movie, you know you're watching a real magic show."

With one Chinese extra hospitalised after slamming his face into a glass window, dozens of A-list bruises and countless hours wasted in London waiting for the real rain to stop before the crew could set up the fake weather machines, wouldn't it have been easier to create the "magic" in a computer?

"Absolutely!" laughs Chu. "There's one trick in the movie that we built this huge, *expensive*, very complicated contraption for. In any other movie, it would have been some string, a green screen and two seconds on a laptop. But you can feel it – the weight, the gravity of all the details. It's what makes the movie magic. We made a pact before we went in that we would hold each other accountable for keeping it real, and we never backed down from that."

With a second sequel already rumoured, *Now You See Me 2* might not be giving up all its secrets just yet – but we can still expect an awful lot of tricks from the series with the baggiest sleeves in the business.

Paul Bradshaw



SHORE thing

Blake Lively takes on a Great White...

THE SHALLOWS
STARRING Blake Lively, Óscar Jaenada, Sedona Legge
DIRECTOR Jaume Collet-Serra
ETA 1 July

You can never have too many shark movies. Good job too, what with *47 Meters Down* (two sisters trapped in a shark cage at the bottom of the ocean) and *Meg* (a 70ft great white is released from the deep) swimming our way not so very long after *Sharknado*, *The Reef* and *Shark Night* had a feeding frenzy. But our pick of the upcoming fishy tales is *The Shallows*, starring Blake Lively.

Originally titled *In The Deep* when it was treading water on the 2014 Black List, this stripped-down suspenser (and we don't mean Lively in a bikini) sees the former *Gossip Girl* play Mia, mourning the loss of her mother and heading for a deserted stretch of coastline to lose herself in a spot of surfing. Instead she might lose her life

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Secret Weapon

THIS SHARK THRILLER IS LOOKING TO TAKE A BITE OUT OF THE BOX OFFICE

– a huge great white is cruising the waters and Mia must cling to a buoy just 20ft from shore. The question is, how the hell can she negotiate the short trip?

Like *Open Water*, the last shark movie that really got *Total Film* chomping with excitement, *The Shallows* finds strength in streamlined premise that's been described as '*Jaws* meets *127 Hours*'. Jaume Collet-Serra – no stranger to directing unstoppable forces of nature after putting Liam Neeson through his paces in *Unknown*, *Non-Stop* and *Run All Night* – is on megaphone duties, and Spanish star Óscar Jaenada (*Che*, *Pirates Of The Caribbean: On Stranger Tides*) has a small role bookending the main meat of the Woman vs Shark story.

Clearly having a blast when she shot in New South Wales, Australia, Lively took to Instagram to post a picture of herself balancing perilously on a rock with blood pouring down one leg. "No, I wasn't actually attacked by a shark," she posted. "That definitely would have affected my 2015... And my balance". **Jamie Graham**

BRENT out of shape

The Office is in the rearview mirror as Brent goes on tour...

DAVID BRENT: LIFE ON THE ROAD
STARRING Ricky Gervais, Ben Bailey Smith, Kevin Bishop, Andy Burrows
DIRECTOR Ricky Gervais
ETA 19 August

Set 15 years after *The Office*, *Life On The Road* sees David Brent (Ricky Gervais) schlepping up and down the country as he combines his day job as a travelling salesman with his dream of making it as a rock star. Having cashed in his pension, he's taking his band Foregone Conclusion on tour, and naturally a documentary crew tag along.

Gervais, who also writes and directs, stresses that *Life On The Road* is "not an *Office* movie", and that the co-stars of his seminal TV series (Stephen Merchant, Martin Freeman, Mackenzie Crook, *et al*) will not be making an appearance. Instead he will be joined on screen by rapper/comic Ben Bailey Smith (AKA Doc Brown) as Dom, a musician who Brent is holding back; Tom Basden as the band's road manager, Dan; and the likes of Kevin Bishop, Diane Morgan and Razorlight drummer Andy Burrows as Brent's fellow band members. Foregone Conclusion's tracks include 'Please Don't Make Fun Of The Disabled' and 'Native American'.

Gervais says that *Life On The Road* is a movie about "delusion, desperation and excruciating faux pas, all wrapped up in one little middle-aged rep on his continued quest for fame and acceptance."

Thing is, that quest is now tougher than ever, so expect the cringe-com to ratchet up a few notches. "In *The Office*, Brent was 40 and going through a bit of a midlife crisis, but he was basically in charge of quite a sweet office with nice people," says Gervais. "But the world's changed behind him. Now it's a dog-eat-dog world. Now we've got people getting on *The Apprentice* by going, 'I will destroy anyone who gets in my way.' There's a whole new culture of rolling over people to get what you want. It's applauded."

Expect plenty of grimace with your grin. **Jamie Graham**



Secret Weapon

DAVID BRENT LOOKS TO LEAD HIS FANBASE TO THE CINEMA



SUMMER PREVIEW

Big Gun

BELOVED KIDS' BOOK FINALLY STANDS TALL ON THE BIG SCREEN

DREAM team

Spielberg + Dahl + Disney = gigantic hit.

THE BFG
STARRING Mark Rylance, Ruby Barnhill, Rebecca Hall Bill Hader
DIRECTOR Steven Spielberg
ETA 22 July

"It's an overused word but this really is a magical tale," says producer Frank Marshall, whose work with Steven Spielberg stretches all the way back to *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* in 1981. "It's just such a wonderful, classic story, and Melissa [*Mathison, screenwriter*] was able to preserve all the elements that made the book so wonderful: warmth, heart, wonder. She brought the same kind of understanding that she had of *E.T.*. *The BFG* has much the same tone as that movie."

The BFG, which is, of course, an acronym for Big Friendly Giant, deserves all of your excitement. Not only does it herald Spielberg's reteaming with Mathison (who sadly passed away last year) but it marks his first adaptation of a Roald Dahl book and his directorial debut for Disney. When it comes to family fantasy, this is the dream team.

Talking of dreams, they are exactly what the BFG specialises in – this 24ft softie collects them to release into children's bedrooms at night. Sophie, a young orphan, spies him on his rounds one night, and so begins a magical tale of friendship as they embark on an adventure involving the Queen of England, the British Army and Royal Air Force, and a host of 50ft giants who aren't friendly but flesh-eating.

Marshall has been trying to make the movie since 1991, with Paramount initially on board and Robin Williams tipped to play the BFG in the late-'90s. Now he's delighted it took 25 years to happen, for it meant technology finally caught up with Dahl's vast imagination.

"Steven's experience of working with Weta on *Tintin* certainly prepared him for this, but this is the 2.0 version of the motion-capture process," he says. "Steven created a process where the BFG and Sophie could work in the same space despite of the difference in size. With his combination of technical skill and creative skill, I really think that Steven is the only one who could have pulled this off. I don't even want to call it motion capture anymore – it's a step forward in the storytelling process."

But did acclaimed stage actor Mark Rylance, who has of course just won an Oscar for Spielberg's Cold War thriller *Bridge Of Spies* and now steps into the BFG's canoe-sized shoes, take to the process? Marshall laughs. "He was like a duck to water! He wore this silly suit and he was still in character all the time. You could close your eyes and see the giant. That was so important for Ruby [*Barnhill, who plays Sophie*], to feel like she was talking to the BFG. It was a wonderful connection that they had."

Marshall promises all of the things that made Spielberg a household name in the '70s and '80s – heart, tingly scares and bar-raising spectacle. "The scenes in Dream Country and also in Giant Country are wonderful," he says, then coughs out a laugh of childlike disbelief. "But the whole movie is so magical, frankly! It's Steven at the height of his filmmaking powers." **Jamie Graham**

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Secret Weapon

THIS GIGANTIC REMAKE LOOKS TO PROVE THAT SIZE DOES MATTER

CHARIOTS of fire

The Roman Empire enters the digital age...

BEN-HUR
STARRING Jack Huston, Nazanin Boniadi, Morgan Freeman, Toby Kebbell
DIRECTOR Timur Bekmambetov
ETA 26 August

After *Noah* and *Exodus: Gods And Kings*, Biblical epics are all the rage right now, so it's no surprise to see Hollywood again dusting off Lew Wallace's 1880 novel *Ben-Hur: A Tale Of The Christ*, a story so big it makes all other epics seem titchy.

Previous versions include the supersized 1925 take and, of course, the Charlton Heston-starring 1959 version that weighed in at almost four hours and garnered 11 Oscars. How do you top those? Well, you can at least try by giving the reins to Russian/Kazakh visionary Timur Bekmambetov (*Night Watch*, *Wanted*) and hurling a Colosseum's-worth of CGI at the screen.

The story sees Jewish nobleman Judah Ben-Hur (Jack Huston) falsely accused of treason by his adopted brother Messala (Toby Kebbell), an officer of the Roman army, and sold into slavery. Five years later, Ben-Hur and other galley slaves spill into the sea when two ships collide, and our hero survives to set out on a roaring rampage of revenge which culminates in the biggest, baddest chariot race imaginable. Brother on brother, blood on blood.

The chariot race in the 1959 film took five weeks to shoot, on 18 acres of backlot, and employed 15,000 extras. One of the high points of action cinema, it didn't scare Bekmambetov, who spent *six* weeks on his version of this iconic set-piece and came at it with a new aesthetic.

"The chariot race today is like Formula 1... with a lot of whip pans and zooming," he says, admitting that he found inspiration in YouTube videos. "But it's a real race with 32 horses running in a cloud of dust and the actors love it."

Huston says he was "incredibly honoured to step into Charlton Heston's sandals", and it's a good job too – he and Kebbell had to train for two-and-a-half months, six days a week, for the chariot race, and the shoot lasted a whopping six months. As with the '59 version, much of the action was shot at Rome's legendary Cinecitta Studios.

But expect key differences: *Ben-Hur* 2016 will zoom in on the formative relationships of Ben-Hur and Messala, before the Roman Empire took control of Jerusalem, and Jesus will have a prominent role. The actor playing Christ, Rodrigo Santoro, even received the blessing of Pope Francis.

Will *Ben-Hur* still speak to today's audiences? Bekmambetov has no doubt. "We share the same values they had 2,000 years ago," he says, pointing out there will be political machinations as well as somersaulting CG horses. "It's so relatable, so contemporary and so scary." **Jamie Graham**

SUMMER PREVIEW

HERE COMES the cavalry

The other films that are set to assault the multiplexes this silly season... WORDS **KEVIN HARLEY**



Big Gun

ALICE THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Can Johnny Depp restore his "muchness"? Find out with the sequel to 2010's Wonderland eye-boggler, where Mia Wasikowska's Alice races against Time (personified by Sacha Baron Cohen) to save Depp's Hatter. New director James Bobin pimps the scenery; old cast-mates chewing it gleefully include Helena Bonham Carter and the much-missed Alan Rickman. **ETA 27 May**



Secret Weapon

MONEY MONSTER

Top teamwork and topical material augur healthy returns for Jodie Foster's directorial return, starring George Clooney as a financial TV-show host taken hostage on air by blue-collar family man Jack O'Connell (*Starred Up*). With Julia Roberts co-starring, Foster's combustible package of charisma, cable and cash woes looks a strong investment. **ETA 27 May**



Big Gun

WARCRAFT: THE BEGINNING

Marshalling armies of gryphons and frost wolves, hopes are high that Duncan Jones' (*Moon*, *Source Code*) epic game adap of orc/man conflict won't be a load of old Stormwind, but the missing fantasy/sci-fi link between *LOTR* and *Avatar*. **ETA 3 June**



Big Gun

STAR TREK BEYOND

Shohreh Aghdashloo swaps *The Expanse*'s government bigwig for 'High Command of the Federation' as a late addition to reshoots for the threequel. Don't be fazed: things aren't necessarily getting messy. Reshoots are normal and the trailer suggests incoming director Justin Lin has the laughs, scraps, vertiginous falls and Enterprise-bashing crash-fetishism down pat. **ETA 22 July**



Secret Weapon

THE CONJURING 2

Furious 7's James Wan swaps car jumps for jump scares with his sequel to 2013's wardrobe-rattler. Expect deep chills and malevolent music-boxes as paranormal pros the Warrens (Vera Farmiga, Patrick Wilson) encounter Enfield's famous poltergeist. For scare-hounds, the summer's pre-eminent low-laughs, multi-shocks *Ghostbusters* alternative beckons. **ETA 17 June**



Big Gun

INDEPENDENCE DAY: RESURGENCE

"Definitely bigger than the last one," promises Jeff Goldblum, lest anyone feared Mr size-matters Roland Emmerich would downscale the sequel. Worry not: a 20-year wait has given Bill Pullman time to get beardy and the aliens time to get buff. If *10 Cloverfield Lane* frustrated on the destructo-porn front, mark the date. **ETA 24 June**



Secret Weapon

ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS: THE MOVIE

Break out the Bolly: like The Inbetweeners gone AWOL, Edina and Patsy (Jennifer Saunders, Joanna Lumley) hit the glam motherlode with a French Riviera-set movie makeover. "Ravishingly funny," promises Lumley: and a busy guest-list (including Jane Horrocks, Cara Delevingne) should help give David Brent a run for his TV-to-film money this summer. **ETA 1 July**



Secret Weapon

PETE'S DRAGON

Jurassic World's Bryce Dallas Howard sticks with the towering beasties for *Ain't Them Bodies Saints* auteur David Lowery's intriguing "re-imagining". When Howard's ranger finds feral woods-child Pete (Oakes Fegley), she also meets his winged protector, who could be the BFG's main challenger for child/creature bonding fables this summer. **ETA 12 August**

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CALIFORNIA Dreamin'

Christian Bale and Natalie Portman get a fresh perspective on LA in **Knight Of Cups**, Terrence Malick's experimental, spiritual take on Hollywood. Total Film sits down with the Oscar-winning stars to talk about the elusive auteur and his unusual methods.

WORDS **JAMES MOTTRAM**

"It feels like guerrilla filmmaking," says Christian Bale, explaining just what it's like to make a movie with the celebrated writer-director Terrence Malick. "There's also a sense of spontaneity to them, which unfortunately gets lost, usually, the bigger the film." Sitting in a conference room in Berlin's Four Seasons, dressed in green cargo pants and a long-sleeved black shirt, Bale is more than experienced to make the comparison. Blockbusters like the *Dark Knight* trilogy nestle comfortably next to smaller films on his CV, such as Malick's new movie, *Knight Of Cups*.

Shot in 2012, it's been a long time coming. In the time it's taken Malick to shape what Bale calls a "huge amount of footage" in the cutting room, the Welsh-born Oscar-winner has seen *American Hustle*, *Exodus: Gods And Kings* and *The Big Short* all released. Likewise, Bale's *Cups* co-star Natalie Portman has been in *Thor: The Dark World*, this month's troubled western *Jane Got A Gun* and made her directorial debut, adapting Amos Oz's *A Tale Of Love And Darkness*.

Not that *Total Film* is about to accuse the mysterious Malick of slacking. Since the press-shy director made his comeback – after a 20-year hiatus – with *The Thin Red Line* (1998), he's been positively prolific. Pocahontas tale *The New World* (2005), starring Bale, was followed by the extraordinary Cannes-winning *The Tree Of Life* (2011) and lo-fi romance *To The Wonder* (2012). *Cups*, meanwhile, was shot back-to-back with >>

Malick's next film, *Weightless*, set around the Austin music scene, with Bale and Portman credited alongside their *Cups* co-star Cate Blanchett.

Similarly, *Cups* delves into the entertainment industry – albeit this time in Los Angeles. Bale's character Rick, a Hollywood screenwriter, is a lost soul set adrift in a world of lavish pool parties, lurid strip joints and beautiful Pacific beaches. Co-starring a host of recognisable faces – Antonio Banderas, Jason Clarke, Wes Bentley, Imogen Poots – the emotional core comes from his relationships with Blanchett, as his ex-wife Nancy, and Portman, as Elizabeth, a married woman he has a fling with.

Like *To The Wonder*, *Cups* has a semi-autobiographical feel – not least with reference to Rick having a brother that died – and you suspect Malick is grappling with his own past. "I think every part of the process, it seems, for him, is a search," says Portman, who arrives for our chat in a long black dress, beige kitten heels and a pink Dior frock-coat. So no chance, then, of Malick taking on one of those blockbusters – a new *Batman*, perhaps? "That would be a very funny film," grins Bale, "wouldn't it?"



In deep: Rick (Christian Bale) and ex-wife Nancy (Cate Blanchett)

How did you first meet Terrence Malick?

CHRISTIAN BALE: We met in 2003. I was asked to go along and just read some of the stuff from *The New World*, just for him to listen to it, but then he ended up putting me in that.

NATALIE PORTMAN: I'd been lucky enough to meet him 10 years ago. I told him how much I absolutely admired his work and we kept in touch over the years... He'd send me a book or I would call him up and ask him about something. He got me reading George Eliot. I read *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda* thanks to him, which was amazing. She became one of my favourite authors.

CB: He's wonderful company. He's a great conversationalist.

What were your impressions of the script?

CB: There was no script whatsoever – nothing! I would talk with Terry about what the character was, where he came from, what he did for a living, about his brothers, his parents, about how successful he'd become, and that was it – I didn't have anything else beyond that. So I'd arrive each day, and he'd come and sit me at a table, and a few [*people*] would have pages; I'd be trying to have a look at them to see because they would know a little bit more! He called it 'torpedoing'. So he would get them to throw things at me, and just see how Rick responded to that... I'd turn up every day and have no idea what was going to be thrown my way.

NP: We were only given [*pages*] for our character so the rest is really a mystery. Even if you're in a scene with another character, you don't know. But there was a lot to work with. Terrence writes like... you'll get 10 pages of possible lines that you could say, that might be what your thoughts are, what your lines are, and then you choose what feels right out of that. And sometimes he'll yell something out in the middle of a scene for you to say, or tell you right before a take to try this line.



So, Natalie, what did you know about Christian's character, Rick?

NP: Not much! I knew about our relationship. I had talked with Terry before about how it's an affair for me but it feels more real, like real love, than my own relationship, my own marriage, in the movie. Then I would have lines like: "You never say anything!" So I had the feeling he was going to be a quiet character, but that was the extent of what I knew – only because of what I was given about Elizabeth.

Were Malick's methods hard to adjust to?

CB: I would notice it more in people who were arriving for a few days. I would see total confusion on their faces to start with! "What? It doesn't matter what I do? I can do anything I want! Can I leave? What does that mean?" And then understanding, and then looking at me and going, "You didn't say any of the lines that you were meant to say!" And I'd say, "Yeah, I didn't feel like it!" They'd go, "What is going on here!?" And then really enjoying it, and very quickly realising that Terry is not that sort of dictator director who's saying, "What did you do?" Everything is just, "Hey, it is what it is. There are no mistakes. You do what you feel is right." And, sure, you might have given those pages to those

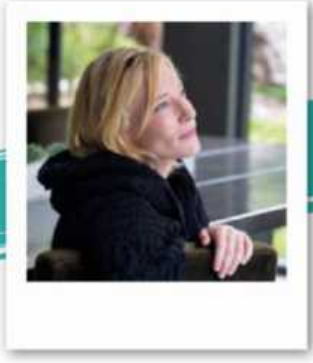
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‘Rick’s at this spiritual crisis. He’s achieved all of his dreams and desires but he feels like something is very wrong’

Christian Bale









players but he made no demands that they absolutely say every line. He just always wanted to make sure that whatever they said came very naturally to them. When you have that, once you get used to it... Like anything, you arrive and you’re a stranger and trying to feel your way through it. But once you get used to it, with Terry he makes you feel very comfortable, then you understand it and it feels very freeing.

NP: He has a shooting style that’s exploratory. He’s looking to discover things all the time and it’s a really beautiful way to work – to take into all kinds of different movies. We tend to get into a rhythm where you feel like you’re just executing the script, where you’re putting the script onto the screen, and to go every day and say, “What can we find? What can we discover? What can we invent?” is really a beautiful thing. Although there is some planning. It’s not like you just show up. There was months before of reading, watching movies and talking to Terry about the character. So you have a strong base.

What about the scene where you jump off the pier? Was that invented on the day?

CB: Terry was very worried. He really didn’t want me to do that – he didn’t know how deep it was and I didn’t either! But I saw a paddle-boarder, and went, “Deep enough?” He went, “Not really!” I went, “Well...” And I did it. I don’t know... It was just the mood I was in on that day. Terry’s a very nurturing guy, and he never wants anyone to be hurt. So I did it and he couldn’t stop me because he was too far back. But, yeah, I was just in a slightly self-destructive mood that day.

What preparation did you do? Did he send you anything?

CB: We looked at a few things, like [*John Bunyan’s*] *Pilgrim’s Progress*, and we talked about some other things... Walker Percy’s *The Moviegoer*, a little bit of *The Snow Leopard* by Peter Matthiessen, who is in the film. And then some other things which we picked from. So, yeah, there were multiple things.

NP: We spent a lot of time with Peter Matthiessen, which was incredible, and that was one of the books that Terry had told me to read – *The Snow Leopard* – so of course I was googly-eyed with him! That was a truly life-changing experience to spend time with him. Obviously it’s in the film but we had a few days at the Japanese Gardens, where he was explaining Zen to us. Unbelievable! You could tell he and Terry would be friends, because they both had that vast, endless human spirit. So when you see that become a few flashes in the movie, you think ‘What a shame’ because you know the depth of spirituality that we >>

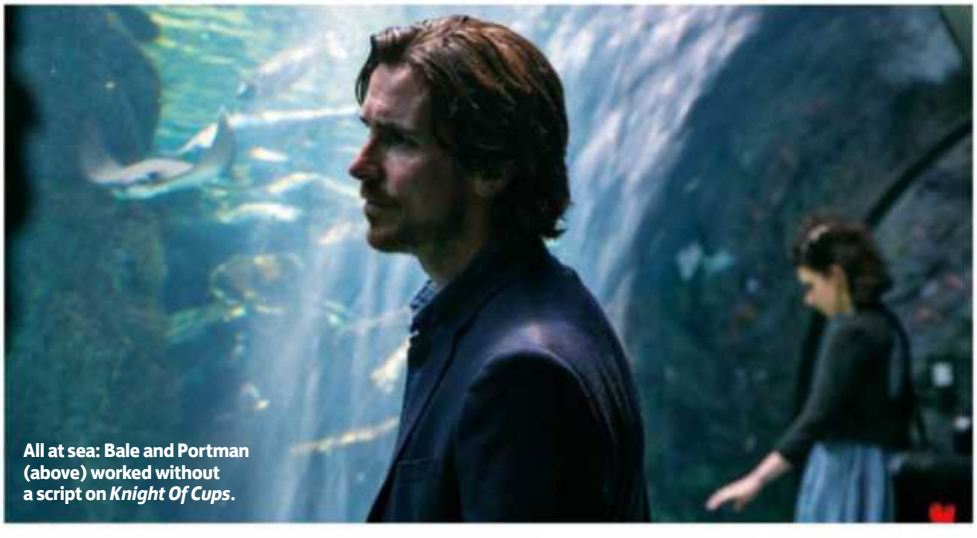


experienced with him. I think it comes across in those impressions, though.

Talking of this, how did you relate to the spiritual message of the film?

NP: Well, I don't necessarily think it's one spiritual message. I think Terry leaves a lot of room open for interpretation. I think it's very much the modern human's problem: to be looking for purpose but being lost about what the purpose is, what it is that we're seeking and what the goal is. We have these external pressures that you're supposed to go for wealth, fame or acceptance by other people, or whatever these things are, and obviously it rings hollow when it's attained. And then there's this journey. You see characters like the Cate Blanchett character, [*a doctor*] who is giving herself to other people who are the outcasts of society, and obviously there's a glimpse of how life could be more meaningful and how it could have more fullness. Like I said, Terry's humanity is vast and I think you feel it in every one of his films. You leave the films going into the world with more awe and more love for people. I think it's a very positive thing.

CB: [*With my character*] he's at this point where he's at this spiritual crisis, where he's recognising that he's achieved all of his dreams and desires; he's achieved this peak of his profession. He's invited to all of the exclusive parties that people try to get into, and he's a permanent fixture at these things, but feeling like something is very wrong, something's missing, and something needs to change – this can't be the end.



All at sea: Bale and Portman (above) worked without a script on *Knight Of Cups*.

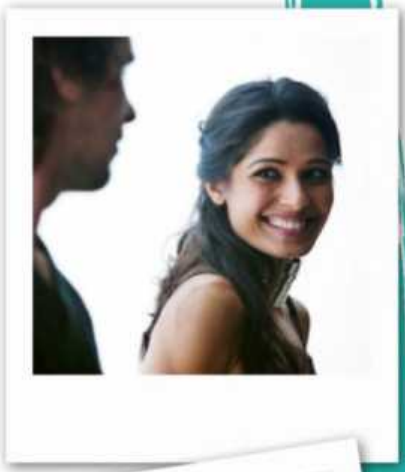
What do you think of the film's portrait of Los Angeles?

CB: I kind of love the LA it depicts. To me, it has such different facets. It's a horror story. There's ugliness. There's real beauty. There's real substance. But overall there's incredible potential, and it's all your choice of where you go, and just finding that success often actually takes you to the ugliest places. They can seem like the most grand but they can often be the ugliest. To me, that's the same as every other city I've ever been to or lived in, and every other business I know people are involved in. Hollywood is just a little bit more... Everyone gesticulates a little bit bigger. It's maybe a little bit more colourful.

What about Rick's attitude to women? Does it show women as victims?

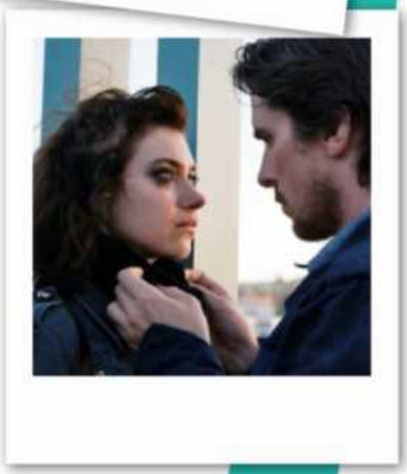
CB: I think certainly in my character, there is a guilt – has he cast a shadow over these women in his past? Was he a good man to them? Was he not a good man? Especially Cate Blanchett's character, the ex-wife, and then we've got Natalie's character, who he had an affair with and she was a married woman. He's trying to work out – what did he do to these women? That seems to be something essential that he feels he needs to do before he could continue. So, yeah, there's a great deal where he feels he's used women entirely for pleasure and sometimes ignored who they are and their substance, and he's trying to revisit that. And indeed that's exactly what he's doing with himself, and almost everybody around him – the whole of the scene

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that he lives in. The novelty no longer excites him and the substance has gone. He needs to discover something new.

NP: I think it's very hard to make any assumptions across gender. The most basic fact of humanity is that every human being is different and there are no rules, essentially. What might be true for this story... I don't know if you can generalise into life.

How did you feel when you saw the finished film?

CB: I felt like I do when I listen to a beautiful piece of music that means something to me. I felt like I do when I read a book. I felt like it wasn't a storyteller imposing something on me. I felt like I was interactive with it and able to put my own meaning onto it, and that being the intention. And therefore depending on what mood I'm in, it can mean different things to me. I found that and the rhythm of it to be something that came through in a very personal manner to me. That's what I told Terry afterwards. I said it feels more like music or literature to me than a film.

> 'Terry's looking to discover things all the time. It's a really beautiful way to work' **Natalie Portman**

Natalie, after *Knight Of Cups*, you went on to direct your first feature, *A Tale Of Love And Darkness*. Did working with Malick feed into this?

NP: Oh, a hundred per cent. I feel extraordinarily lucky to have worked with him right before directing. He reminds you that there are no rules and that every day should be an exploration and a discovery, flowing with mistakes and welcoming and looking for the weird things that happen. When you're shooting a regular movie, if a civilian walks into your shot, you yell, "Cut!" and "Get out my shot" And you go, "Ugh, we have to do it again!" [*With*] Terry, you go up to the person, you start a conversation with them, you hang out with them, you try and incorporate them into the scene, and then afterwards, they will try and get a release [*form signed*] so the person is in the movie! It's just a different attitude. And the freedom that he has, by having this small unit – it's like a 10-person unit at most. The actors change clothes in the car. It stops, they close the back door, they put curtains on the windows, and we're changing and we get out and shoot. It feels like a student film, and there's a great freedom and you get so many interesting things that way. It's why they capture these moments that are really transcendent.

Christian, do you ever feel like directing?

CB: I don't think it's for me. I don't know why exactly. But I don't really have that urge.

You've both shot a third film – *Weightless* – with Malick, right?

CB: I was there for just two days. It almost certainly means I'm not going to be in it. Two days in a Terry film means you're not going to be in it!

NP: I worked for four and a half days on *Knight Of Cups* out of a two or three-month shoot. So I was like, "There's a good chance I'm not going to end up in the movie!" But the beauty is the process is so incredible, that's not what it's about. I also trust Terry. If you're not in, you probably deserve to not be in. What ends up on screen is so refined. TF

***Knight Of Cups* opens on 6 May.**





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ON A MISSION

After matching Tom Cruise in Mission: Impossible, **Rebecca Ferguson** is suddenly on Hollywood's most-wanted list. With music bio Florence Foster Jenkins leading the pack, Total Film meets everyone's latest Scandi obsession.

WORDS **JAMES MOTTRAM** PORTRAIT **MARICA ROSENGÅRD**

Chances are, if you ever find yourself sitting opposite Rebecca Ferguson in a café or airport lounge, you might be the subject of a little game. "I love studying people," she says. "If you start tuning into the conversation next to you, you can gather a lot of information from people. It's great fun." And if she's sitting with a friend? "Then the bet is on," she grins. "You can go, 'Right, who can find out the most in 15 minutes?'"

No wonder this striking 32-year-old made such a good spy in last year's *Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation*. Playing the enigmatic Ilsa Faust, she is arguably the only actress in the five-film franchise to give Tom Cruise's Ethan Hunt a run for his dollars. Prior to that, this half-Swedish, half-English former soap actress was best known for her Golden Globe-nominated turn in BBC drama *The White Queen*, a brief role in *Hercules* and Biblical mini-series *The Red Tent*.

In person, she's a charmer – full of compliments and coy looks. "I'm really goddamn lucky that Tom took a chance on me after *The Red Tent*," she says, in an accent that floats between British boarding school (cultivated from watching Helen Mirren in *Prime Suspect*) and sultry Scandinavian. "If you don't have a lot of credits, there's so much involved when it comes to box office: Will you pull money in? Will you be a safe option? And he just took a gamble, didn't he?"

Cruise simply got there first, talent-spotting the brunette, blue-eyed Ferguson before others did. Now she's on a roll that sees her stacking up some of the most anticipated movies of the forthcoming year, including "this year's *Gone Girl*" ™ – AKA Tate Taylor's take on *The Girl On The Train*, and drool-worthy Jo Nesbø adaptation *The Snowman*, co-starring Michael Fassbender and directed by Ferguson's fellow Swede, Tomas Alfredson. "I feel like I've been in heaven now for the last year," she says without exaggeration.

Before either comes Cold War romantic drama *Despite The Falling Snow* and – for a change of pace – the Stephen Frears-directed tragi-comedy *Florence Foster Jenkins*. The last time *Total Film* met with Ferguson, all dolled up in Burberry on the *Mission: Impossible* merry-go-round, she had yet to meet with her co-star Meryl Streep, who plays Jenkins – a real-life 1920s Manhattan socialite and amateur soprano who, as she performed in front of paid-off sycophants, was blissfully unaware that she was tone deaf.

Back then, Ferguson told *TF* that she hoped Streep, like Cruise, would be "caring and considerate". They eventually met, unexpectedly, when the actress had a scheduled lunch with >>



Hugh Grant, who plays Florence's husband St. Clair Bayfield. "And she walked in as well. So there I am – I get two for one. I wasn't prepared." So how was she? "You know what? She is absolutely a humdinger!" laughs Ferguson, almost spilling her coffee. That's one way to describe the triple-Oscar-winner.

Ferguson plays Kathleen, mistress to Grant's seemingly charming St. Clair, though as the actress points out, with Florence suffering from syphilis, their affair may well have been sanctioned by "a quiet understanding" between husband and wife. "She probably knew about it," she says, though it rather feeds into the theme of delusion that rattles around this increasingly moving story, as the continually off-key Florence relentlessly pursues her stage ambitions.

The tragedy comes with those around her – notably St. Clair – enabling her fantasy, usually by bribing critics. Eventually, though, it becomes impossible to hide her appalling voice from the world. "There's a lot of sadness [*to the story*]," says Ferguson. "It's mockery. It's what humans do best, isn't it? Sadly enough. It is very sad. [*With syphilis too*], there's so much that she was struggling with, but yet she was pushing and pushing and pushing for her dream to come true."

Like Florence, who can be heard still on YouTube murdering Mozart's aria 'Queen Of The Night', Ferguson's character Kathleen is real. "Hugh sent me a picture of St. Clair and Kathleen – there is one image of them. There is a little bit of information. We do know that she's a piano teacher, we do know she came from England; so there's a little bit but not much. Stephen [*Frears*] and I would sit down and make it up with the writers and create our version of her."

While *Florence* is the chance to see Ferguson in something light and quick-witted, *Despite The Falling Snow* presented challenges of a different sort. Two characters, two accents, two time periods – it was anything but easy.

Directed by Shamim Sarif, who adapted the story from her own novel, the film yo-yos between 1959 Moscow and New York four decades later, with Ferguson playing Russian spy Katya and her niece Lauren in the respective segments. With the latter investigating what happened to her aunt, who falls for the American government official she's meant to spy on, it's a curious decision to cast Ferguson in both roles – and one made more difficult by the demands of a shooting schedule, forcing her to flip-flop between characters. "We couldn't really shoot one character first, which was the dream scenario. But it's a great book. I love the whole *Sliding Doors* effect of jumping in time."

At least Ferguson's own dual background prepared her for the requisite versatility. Her Anglo-Irish mother Rosemary (reportedly a distant relative of the Duchess of York, Sarah Ferguson) came to Stockholm in her mid-20s, where she met and married Ferguson's Swedish father. There, she swiftly ingratiated herself into the local cultural scene. "She would hang out with ABBA and help them translate songs into English," smiles Ferguson, who sadly never got to met Benny, Björn and co ("before my time").

Raised bilingual, Ferguson studied singing and piano in Stockholm, but – despite a little teen modelling in commercials – acting was never her thing. "I hated it at the beginning. I didn't like having the attention," she says. It was only when her mother signed her up "for a random casting" for Swedish soap *New Times* when she was 15 that she changed her mind. "I had the camera on me, it was like a filter – I felt very, very hidden, weirdly enough."

While she stuck with the soap for two-and-a-half years, dance was always her real passion. Learning jazz, modern, ballet, street and funk, in her early twenties she even taught Argentinean tango, after briefly turning her back on acting. She only picked it up again after being cast in a 2008 episode of *Wallander*, a year after she gave birth to her son Isac and moved with her then-boyfriend to Simrishamn, a small fishing village in the south of Sweden, where she still lives.

It still took another five years of working in small-scale local productions before Ferguson scored big with *The White Queen*. A lusty take on Philippa Gregory's best-selling trilogy, set around the War of the Roses, Ferguson's turn as Elizabeth Woodville, who married Edward IV, broke her into the big time. "I feel like I've been working since I did *The White Queen*," she says. "It has been back-to-back-to-back." The most she's managed in the last year is a brief fortnight's respite.





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Duplicitous: Ferguson as mistress Kathleen in *Florence Foster Jenkins* and (below left) playing dual roles in *Despite The Falling Snow*.



Rear guard: backing up Tom Cruise in *Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation*.



'I choose to continue to live my life as I've always lived it – as long as I can keep it that way, that's fantastic'

Not that she's complaining. "Once you are in, and there are more scripts to read and there are auditions or offers... For me, I'm just thinking, 'Go for it', while it's there. You never know when it's going to end." Even before *Mission: Impossible* emerged, Ferguson had secured *The Girl On The Train* – Hollywood's hottest thriller this year. Adapted from Paula Hawkins' runaway best-seller, it's a multi-perspective murder-mystery led by Emily Blunt's alcoholic Rachel, left broken by the dissolution of her marriage.

"It's about addiction – the battles that we all fight," says Ferguson, who plays Anna – the former-mistress-now-wife of Rachel's ex-husband. "It can be relationships, it can be jealousy, it can be the man who leaves you for another woman, it can be alcohol abuse... Some people are not battling anything. Lucky them!" That wouldn't make such an interesting film, *TF* points out. "Wouldn't that be a fun one? The Woman Who Had No Problems! Or just The Girl On The Train." She giggles. "It'd be a long fucking movie. It's still going!"

Now, after a brief London pit-stop for a photo-shoot and a chat to *Total Film*, she's heading back to Oslo to complete *The Snowman*. She plays a police officer, working with Fassbender's detective Harry Hole, to bring down a serial killer who likes to leave said snowman at every murder scene. "It's a very grim story, and what makes it grim is this vast environment. It's snowy, it's winter, it's dark, it's Norway, it's mountains, it's the emptiness, it's the void... It's knowing that if you get lost there's no-one out there except a killer. And his symbol is this scary-ass snowman."

When *The Snowman* wraps (or is that melts?), Ferguson has a couple of months rest before shooting *Life* in July – "a space movie", as she trills excitedly, with Ryan Reynolds and Jake Gyllenhaal about astronauts discovering life on Mars – directed by another Swede, *Safe House*'s Daniel Espinosa. Curiously, it fills that black hole left after Ferguson was strongly rumoured to be taking the female lead – now filled by Katherine Waterston – in Ridley Scott's now-shooting *Alien: Covenant*.

So, deal or no deal? "I think that was internet waffle," says Ferguson. "Emily [*Blunt*] put it beautifully – I read an article where she said as soon as an actress or actor is hit by media, all doors open up and we assume they're going to be in all the big new movies." Admittedly, it wasn't so far-fetched. Ferguson has form with Scott; they shot a Showtime pilot in 2013, *The Vatican*, that was never greenlit. "I've love to work with Ridley," she says. "I had a teaser and I want more!"

Then there's the little matter of those just-won't-go-away rumours that Ferguson will return for the next *Mission: Impossible* movie. No female lead has yet to make it back to the series for a second outing – but then Ferguson's Faust was more than a match for Hunt.

"We are having discussions, yes, but nothing is signed, nothing is ready," she says, cautiously. "So if I say 'yes, [*it's happening*]', they might go, 'Ha-ha! You thought so, didn't you? No you're not!' So I have no idea."

Still, surely this remarkable run Ferguson is embarking on is going to make her game observing people in airports and cafés all the more difficult? "I never find it a problem to go out," she shrugs. "I barely get recognised. I don't go looking for it. I live a quite modest, simple life. I live in a fishing village! I'm not saying I don't like the rambles and the parties, but I choose to continue my life as I've always lived it. As long as I can keep it that way, then that's fantastic. I think it's how you meet it, really, isn't it?" TF

***Florence Foster Jenkins* opens on 6 May. *Despite The Falling Snow* opens on 15 April.**

TOTAL FILM *Classic*

AIRPLANE!



Making a lasting impact on both spoofs and disaster movies, **Airplane!** still has an unbeatable gag-per-minute rate that continues to inspire more than 35 years on. Total Film meets writer/director Jim Abrahams to discuss the serious business of comedy.

WORDS DREW TURNEY

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Before *Total Film* even sits down and says a single word to *Airplane!* co-writer/director Jim Abrahams, we've been punked. We should have known. Among the interview tidbits that accompanied the film in the 2005 Blu-ray release was an in-joke Abrahams shared with his co-writer/directors, brothers David and Jerry Zucker.

In one of the film's many classic sight gags, the nun (Maureen McGovern) on Trans American flight 209 is reading a magazine called *Boy's Life*. The film then cuts to little Joey (Rossie Harris) reading a magazine called *Nun's Life*, which shows a nun in full habit on the cover, riding a surfboard off the waters of Malibu.

While discussing how such a shot would simply be Photoshopped today, the trio talk about how Jim – a keen surfer back in the day – dressed as a nun and caught a few waves for the shot. So we start our interview by asking the now 71-year-old if that was fun. "I'm the surfer?" Abrahams asks with genuine surprise. "No, that's a lie."

Turns out that whenever the three got together to do publicity for the film, they had a contest between them to see who could get the biggest lie printed in an interview. It not only entertained them mightily, it gave them the idea for their next film. >>





Panic stations: Steve "Looks like I picked the wrong week to quit smoking" McCroskey (Lloyd Bridges) and Kramer (Robert Stack).



"TODAY WE'D SPOOF SAN ANDREAS. IT HAD ALL THE SAME CLICHÉS... THEY'RE RIDING ALONG IN SOME FLOOD IN DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO. IT WAS PRETTY RIDICULOUS"

"We were doing publicity somewhere in Europe for *Airplane!* and somebody asked us 'What do you guys do in southern California for entertainment?'," Abrahams says. "Somebody made up skeet surfing. 'We go surfing and shoot skeet.' That got printed. Eventually it wound up in *Top Secret* [*in the 1984 film's opening credits*]. If you're on the interview circuit trying to publicise something, you tend to get similar questions. It spiced things up for us."

GROUND ZERO

Spice is exactly what the godfathers of the spoof comedy brought to the genre. So how did *Airplane!* take off? The Zuckers/Abrahams' first film, *The Kentucky Fried Movie* (1977), was a series of sketches, inspiration for many of them coming from cheesy late-night TV commercials; they'd often tape films overnight, and later view them on fast-forward, skim-watching for the ads.

During one such viewing, they couldn't take their eyes off the 1957 disaster flick they'd recorded, *Zero Hour!*. The straight-arrow thriller was directed by Hall Bartlett, starred Dana Andrews and Sterling Hayden, and had the guys in stitches.

Airplane! became a virtual remake of *Zero Hour!*, complete with the jokes the guys imagined as they'd watched it. They transposed the story – of PTSD-suffering air force pilot Ted Striker forced to land a passenger plane after the pilots get food poisoning – to such a degree the production had to secure the rights to *Zero Hour!* to move ahead.

It's a key reason why *Airplane!* is still so funny. As long as Hollywood pumps out pompous, self-important disaster films, there'll be a market for writers and directors out there to stick pins in them.

"Today we'd spoof *San Andreas*," Abrahams says with a laugh. "I don't think David or Jerry saw *San Andreas* but I did. I sat there thinking, 'Oh, gosh we could have used this.' It had all the same clichés as *Zero Hour!* or any disaster movie. They're riding along in some flood in downtown San Francisco. I mean, it was pretty ridiculous."

GAINING ALTITUDE

By their own admission, Abrahams and the Zuckers weren't screenwriters. Luckily, basing the story on that of *Zero Hour!*, *Airplane!* virtually wrote itself. They didn't only lift the story and structure, verbatim quotes and complete scenes made the leap. (Dr Rumack's (Leslie Nielsen) illustrious line – "The life of everyone aboard depends on just one thing, finding someone back there who can not only fly this plane, but who didn't have fish for dinner," came straight from *Zero Hour!*.)

"We'd go through a scene at a time and say, 'It'd be funny in this scene if...'," Abrahams says. "The guy picking the wrong week to quit smoking was in *Zero Hour!*, so we thought it'd be funny if it escalated to all these other drugs he picked the wrong week to give up."

Buoyed by the success of *Airplane!*, the trio didn't know just what a blessing Arthur Hailey's script had been. "We were joke writers," Abrahams recalls. "It wasn't until after *Top Secret!*

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River song: Stewardess Randy (Lorna Patterson) belts out Peter, Paul & Mary's 'River Of Jordan'.





came out and didn't do so well that we started to genuinely appreciate the gift of *Zero Hour!*. When you think about it, it's a well-structured three-act play – very well-structured comedically, but it dealt with real human problems."

Whatever the approach or template, Abrahams and the Zuckers were smart enough to know the big sell wasn't in the characters or corny plotting. It was all going to be in the tone.

"To an extent, I guess you buy into if the plane is going to land or not, or Bob and Julie's love story, but you don't really because we keep pulling the rug out from under it," Abrahams says. "By definition, parodies run out of gas somewhere before 90 minutes. You're just kind of motoring along from joke to joke, they run out of steam because you're not genuinely invested in the story or the characters."

TURBULENT TIMES

The original vision for *Airplane!* was for it to be the centrepiece of another sketch collection, like *The Kentucky Fried Movie*. That film had earned Abrahams and the Zuckers some attention, so they didn't have much trouble getting meetings, but *Airplane!* was still a hard sell.

In the end there were two firm offers. One was from Avco, which had formerly been known as Embassy Pictures Corporation and enjoyed great success with *The Graduate*, *This Is Spinal Tap* and *Escape From New York*. The other was Paramount, then under the stewardship of Michael Eisner and Jeffrey Katzenberg. Along with producer Jon Davison, Abrahams and the Zuckers agonised over the course of an entire weekend about which offer to accept, and finally decided on Avco. When they called Katzenberg the following Monday to tell him the bad news, the legendary producer and later DreamWorks studio head convinced the writer/directors to change their minds within the space of the three-minute phone call.

Abrahams doesn't remember the exact content of the conversation. "We ruminated and weighed up and measured everything and made up our mind," he says, "but Jeffery is really good. He's had a long and successful career. I think at the time he was in his twenties, he was one of the vice presidents or something. Very persuasive."

Jon Davison remembers it being a no-brainer. "Given a choice between going with a major studio that was enthusiastic about the picture and a struggling independent that was lukewarm, I don't think we should have taken much convincing," he says. "We were almost with American International Pictures but I couldn't convince their production chief, Jere Henshaw, that it wasn't a good idea to have Dom DeLuise star."

THEY'RE SERIOUS

Yep, early discussions with backers included the idea to fill out the cast with some of the biggest comedy names of the day such as DeLuise and frequent Mel Brooks collaborator Harvey >>

CLOSE-UP

Jim Abrahams on what's surely the comedy's most memorable one-liner...

Why was 'Don't call me Shirley' the first scene to be shot?
Scheduling. Basically Jon Davison [*producer*] scheduled it that way because David, Jerry and I had never directed a movie and that was such an easy scene. I think we shot all the cockpit stuff first because it was the easiest stuff to shoot and we had to prove to the studio we could shoot a movie. The studio didn't quite get the concept of casting straight dramatic actors but when they saw Leslie Nielsen read that line they got it.

When did Leslie get it?
For all those guys, the whole idea of being able to do a comedy and play it the way they did in all their serious movies was a bit of a leap. They loved it, but it took them a day or two to get comfortable and to think it was funny.

Was the scene delivered as written?
Exactly as written. I can remember one or two improvisations in the whole movie. It was very tightly scripted. We'd been working on the script for years.

How many takes were there?
It's a long time ago but it couldn't have been more than one or two – he just nailed it.

Obviously Leslie and Bob Hays (Ted Striker) were pros but did they have trouble delivering the line with a straight face?
I think the first few takes everybody giggles a bit but they're very professional. They were really fun and nice, but incredibly professional – they came to work, they were always prepared. They were also great to hang out with between scenes.

Was it a simple two-camera shot?
That was one camera and we covered both sides, I don't think there was a master. There were scenes with two cameras but very, very few. The scene of the plane crashing into the airport had multiple cameras.

Did you have any sense the line would become so symbolic?
We always thought it was funny but there's no way to guess that 35 years later it will still be around and people will know it. Even today when you hear 'Shirley this' or 'Shirley that' – I like to think people everywhere are giggling. Even if it's in conversation or on the news people will find the name Shirley funny.

Korman ("Oh yeah," Abrahams confirms, "it would have been awful.")

The Zuckers – in their wisdom/naiveté – put their feet down, but it was the masterstroke that made *Airplane!* the classic that it is to this day. The comedy works so well because the characters have no idea they're in a comedy. No matter how ridiculous the hijinks, Ted (Robert Hays), Elaine (Julie Hagerty), Clarence (Peter Graves), Rex (Robert Stack), Steve (Lloyd Bridges) and the gang all think they're in a crisis of great solemnity. They knew there was only one way to deliver zingers that skirted the hair's-breadth line between serious and side-splitting, and that was to get straight dramatic actors to deliver them. It's still the biggest innovation the Zuckers and Abrahams brought to screen comedy.

Abrahams can understand the reservations. None of them had ever directed a movie before (*Kentucky Fried Movie* was directed by then-newcomer John Landis from their script), but they knew exactly what they were doing – even some of the cast didn't understand the intent on set but chose to roll with it.

The studio certainly didn't get it either. "It was sort of a leap for them," Abrahams remembers. "Why would you cast Robert Stack, Leslie Nielsen, Peter Graves and Lloyd Bridges? Parodies had been done – Woody Allen and Mel Brooks had done them – but nobody had done a parody that cast serious actors."

Graves recalls almost not agreeing to the movie because he found the script so tasteless. Throughout filming and right up until *Airplane!* was readying for release, he was terrified he might be lynched over some of the more controversial lines.

Leslie Nielsen, an iron-jawed Hollywood leading man throughout the 1950s and '60s



Dead or alive?: Ted Striker's (Robert Hayes) *Saturday Night Fever*-spoofing disco flashback.

"THERE'S SO MUCH WE COULDN'T BEGIN TO GET AWAY WITH NOW. SOME OF THE JOKES ARE SO OUTRAGEOUS"

(he'd headlined *Forbidden Planet* in 1956 with the iconic Robby the Robot), didn't really understand the whole idea until Abrahams and the Zuckers showed him a video recording of *Zero Hour!* – ironic considering the career reinvention made him the public face of big-screen parody until his death in 2010.

But Abrahams remembers there came a point when everyone knew it was going to work. "Fortunately we started in the cockpit on the first day of shooting with Leslie saying, 'Don't call me Shirley', and that relaxed the studio quite a bit. After that we weren't really questioned."

Still, it was a challenge to get their chosen cast locked down. David Letterman auditioned for the role of Ted Striker, the footage of which is still supposed to exist. A then 30-year-old Bruce [now Caitlyn] Jenner screentested. The studio expressed their desire to see Barry Manilow play the lead.

Abrahams now remembers the studio being collaborative about everything, but one of the weirdest demands actually came from Michael Eisner himself. The script originally had the flight take place on a propeller-driven passenger plane, just like in *Zero Hour!*. Eisner told the *Airplane!* team that if they didn't use a jet airliner, they wouldn't be making the film at his studio. So Trans American flight 209 is a shiny new Boeing 707 on screen, but the Zuckers and Abrahams got the last laugh – the sound effect for the exteriors of the plane flying through the storm is taken from a propeller plane after all.

The shoot crisscrossed Los Angeles for a total of 37 days. The cabin and cockpit scenes were shot on a soundstage at Culver Studios (now the Sony lot), and it's a pleasant surprise to learn parts are still in service in movies and TV, the original cockpit having starred in the likes of *We Bought A Zoo* and the video for Foo Fighters' 'Learn To Fly'.

But the most incredible location was LAX itself, which played both itself and Chicago's O'Hare airport in the introduction to the characters and the ill-fated flight's take-off and emergency landing. Imagine the red tape a production company has to go through to film even close to an airport in the post-9/11 world, let alone throughout one of the terminals and on the runway.

But Davison remembers they had a film crew all over the airport for days. "I don't recall any restrictions being placed on the shooting company," he says, "it was practically like we

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WHAT HAPPENED NEXT...

All that ZAZ... What Abrahams and the Zuckers did after sticking the landing.

TOP SECRET!



The original *Airplane!* gave all three writer/directors careers, even though they didn't return for the sequel. Their follow-up spoof in 1984 was *Top Secret!* (starring a young Val Kilmer). It has become something of a cult favourite, although it was not a box-office hit at the time. The trio also collaborated on short-lived TV series *Police Squad* (1982), which pre-empted *The Naked Gun* film series, starring *Airplane!*'s breakout star, Leslie Nielsen.

HOT SHOTS!



In the early '90s, Abrahams directed the Charlie Sheen-starring *Hot Shots* movies, parodying military action flicks of the '80s such as *Top Gun* and *Rambo*. In 1997, he directed the Meryl Streep TV movie *First Do No Harm*, based on the real-life case of a specialised diet that gave his own son relief from crippling epilepsy. Today he's active in the foundation that bears his son's name.

GHOST



David Zucker, now 67, took over the reigns of the *Scary Movie* series from the Wayans Brothers and continues producing and writing. Jerry, now 65, is still making films and has an eclectic resume – bet you didn't know he directed the Patrick Swayze/Demi Moore weepie *Ghost* that conquered the 1990 box office, made pottery-wheel sculpting erotic and gave The Righteous Brothers' 'Unchained Melody' a new lease of life.







were shooting in a private home. It was a different time."

THE FUNNY BUSINESS

The *Airplane!* creators left the jokes that survived to the final arbiters of any art – the audience – playing the film at universities around LA and cutting jokes that didn't get big laughs. To back-up their decisions, they took audio recordings of screenings, so they had proof a joke worked if a Paramount exec wanted it cut.

And as history proves, *Airplane!* killed it. Every now and then an ultra-low-budget movie breaks out to return its budget hundreds of times over (*The Blair Witch Project*, *Saw*, *Deep Throat*) and *Airplane!* should be remembered among them. After costing just under $3.5m, it made over $83m at the US domestic box office (and a further $40m on home video since), covering the cost of production in just two days.

A sequel was nearly inevitable. Everybody came back to reprise their roles for *Airplane II: The Sequel* (from where else was the SyFy Network inspired to come up with the name *Sharknado 2: The Second One*?), even Howard H. Koch as producer and Elmer Bernstein as composer, who'd hit the perfect sweet spot between serious thriller and bombastically camp with the *Airplane!* score.

Everyone, that is, except the Zuckers and Abrahams – to this day they've never seen it. With *Airplane!* behind them they'd done every airport and plane gag they could see themselves ever doing, and they wanted to move on to serious comedy careers.

"We were very young and very full of ourselves back in those days," Abrahams laughs. "I don't think there are any regrets. We went on and all had careers. Paramount had responsibility to the stock holders."

There's never been talk of an *Airplane III*, but Hollywood's not been shy lately about endlessly rehashing or resurrecting classics. Could an *Airplane!* remake possibly work? "If Paramount wanted to remake *Airplane!* I'm sure I'd be the last person they'd call," says Davison. "But most of their executives are probably savvy enough to know it's not a commercial idea."

Abrahams is more circumspect, but he tends to agree, raising a good point about how well jokes involving paedophilia and substance abuse would land nowadays. "You never say never," he says, "but I can't imagine how it could be improved. There's so much we couldn't begin to get away with now. Some of the jokes are so outrageous. That movie today would be at least an R."

Neither the Zuckers nor Abrahams are known for anything as much as their 35-year-old, $3.5m comedy smash. "I'm just fine with it," Abrahams says. "We were very fortunate. We used to say the seas divided for us. Everything worked out, we got all the actors we wanted, we were a little scared about opening the movie that summer because of the [*Moscow*] Olympics but Jimmy Carter was nice enough to boycott it. It opened the door for each of us to have a really nice career in the movie business. I'm grateful to have my name on *Airplane!* and it will always be there." TF

***Airplane!* is available on DVD now.**


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EWAN MCGREGOR

IS HOTTER THAN EVER. AND THERE'S ALSO THE TRAINSPOTTING SEQUEL. "THE SCRIPT IS OUT THE FUCKING PARK," HE SAYS.

WORDS **JAMIE GRAHAM** PORTRAIT **JEFF VESPA / CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES**

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EWAN MCGREGOR

When *Total Film* launched in 1997, Ewan McGregor was the hottest thing in British cinema, his electrifying turn as heroin addict Renton in *Trainspotting* injecting a staid industry with pure adrenalin. Since then, he's of course conquered Hollywood, as everyone predicted he must, and has amassed 70-odd credits. OK, so they've been of wildly varying quality – his tag as a "promiscuous actor" refers not to the period of his career when he unleashed his penis at every opportunity, but rather to his sizeable quota of dodgy movies – but how many stars, Scottish or otherwise, have worked with Lucas, Burton, Luhrmann, Haynes, Polanski, Allen, Bay, Scott, Singer and Soderbergh?

"I still love what I do," says the 45-year-old actor halfway through our hour-long chat. "I still get a thrill reading a script and going, 'This is brilliant. I want to play this part'."

Perhaps it's this passion that keeps him looking so young. *Total Film* has met McGregor many times over his career, and though his appearance forever alters – long hair, short hair, suited, scruffy – his skin is always immaculate, his teeth dazzling and his charisma radioactive.

Today our talk is down a transatlantic phone line. It's 10am in Los Angeles, McGregor's home with wife, French production designer Eve Mavrakis, and their four daughters, and either he's not a morning person or that aforementioned charisma doesn't survive being bounced off a satellite to a wet and windy London. Not that he's awkward: he's polite and professional; but polite and professional doesn't cut it when you're used to the mile-a-minute anecdotes, the forceful swearing and the blinding grin.

But 10 minutes in, he begins to warm up. How could he not, discussing this slate: playing a university lecturer who becomes the middleman between a Russian mobster (Stellan Skarsgård) and British Intelligence (Damian Lewis) in John le Carré thriller *Our Kind Of Traitor*; making his directorial debut (and shouldering the lead) in an adaptation of Philip Roth's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about a ruptured family and divided nation, *American Pastoral*; portraying Lumiere in Disney's live-action rendition of 1991 animation *Beauty And The Beast*; and, most exciting of all, stepping back into Renton's scuffed trainers for Danny Boyle's long-awaited *Trainspotting* sequel based on Irvine Welsh's book, *Porno*. All the main players are back to reprise their iconic characters – still partial to Class-A drugs but now dedicating much of their time to working in scuzzy skin flicks.





'SHALLOW GRAVE WAS MASSIVELY WELL-RECEIVED. IT STOOD FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT'

"The script is *so* good," McGregor says, the pace of his speech quickening and the brio intensifying. "I have to say, I don't think any of us would have been keen to make a sequel to *Trainspotting* if it hadn't been a stellar script. If you make a bad sequel to a movie, it damages the credibility of the movie that you made 20 years ago. But John Hodge, who wrote the original film, and *Shallow Grave* and *A Life Less Ordinary* – he's just kicked it out the fucking park."

For a lad born in Crieff to teacher parents who nonetheless encouraged him to leave school at 16 to join Perth Repertory Theatre, it's been one hell of a journey. Time to look back on the highlights, and forward to what promises to be the richest period in his 23-year career since he chose cinema in the mid-'90s...

How did *Our Kind Of Traitor* first blip on your radar?

I loved the material. It was such a great story, like all of le Carré's best novels.

You play the role of Perry Makepeace in your own voice...

I felt there wasn't a need to adopt an English accent, or anything like that. It's interesting because I'm always playing characters with accents. So for me to play something in my own voice is quite rare and quite exposing.

Makepeace is not a professional spy. Was it interesting to play an ordinary guy in an extraordinary situation?

Yeah. That was always the fascinating thing

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Spy games: McGregor and Naomie Harris, Perry Makepeace's wife in John le Carré's *Our Kind Of Traitor*.

ALLSTAR

about it. He's almost a bit lost at the beginning. He's cheated on his wife [*Naomie Harris*]. Professionally, he's not doing nearly as well as he hoped. Through this espionage, he finds some sort of strength of character. There's something a little bit whiny about him at the beginning... he's in the doghouse with his wife. There's something a little bit fucking annoying about him. Gradually, he grows a pair.

Ralph Fiennes was initially attached to play Russian money launderer Dima...

Listen, I've got no idea whether there were people up for that role before Stellan. He's perfect. Once somebody's committed to playing it and puts in a performance like that, you can never say, "Oh, well, so and so would be better..." This is it. This is who Dima is. I worked with Stellan on *Angels & Demons* some years ago, and I really enjoyed it. He was very amusing. As we were getting ready to shoot this big scene, he burst in the door, and he's like, "McGregor, you fucking bastard." And I was saying, "You piece of shit." We did this swearing at each other thing. We continued to do it over the years by email [*laughs*]. Every now and again, I'll get a text from him going, "McGregor, you prick."

Dima is drunk, charming and threatening the first time Makepeace meets him. Have you ever been in a real-life situation like that, where things might spiral out of control?

Yeah, yeah, yeah! More so back in the day, when I used to be a drinker. I don't find myself going off with people I don't know so often now that I'm sober [*laughs*]. But back in the day... If I was on a night out, then yeah, I'd end up with people I didn't know. I recognise that scary character who's got a bit of swagger, who's telling you, "Come with us. You're doing this." My character's sort of snivelling away, trying to make up with his wife, so he's attracted to the masculine power that this guy is displaying.

Talking of swagger, you exploded onto the scene with *Shallow Grave* and *Trainspotting*. That was nearly a quarter of a century ago...

It doesn't feel like it. The '90s still feel like just a few years ago. And then you're like, "Oh my God, it's 20-plus years ago. Fucking hell! What the fuck!" But I'm so happy with the work I've done.

When did you last watch *Trainspotting*?

Not for a long, long time. But I will have to, of course. That's one of the funny aspects of [*making* Porno]. I mean, I'm approaching it having not lived in Scotland since I was 17. When we made *Trainspotting*, I was 23 or 24. I was closer to it. Now, I haven't lived there for a long, long time. There's been all kind of things happening, and there's been a referendum. The "It's shite being Scottish" speech that I do in *Trainspotting* was used in the referendum by the pro-independent people! I became a figurehead, unbeknownst to me. And here I am coming back to a role that's intrinsically Scottish. It's a slightly odd feeling. But at the same time, Renton has also been away for a long time, so there are all sorts of similarities. And I think that's what will make it really special, that sort of meta quality of the characters and the actors – our nostalgia for the '90s and what it meant.

Cool Britannia?

There's something very special about that time, and to have been part of it. The movie version of Britpop was *Trainspotting*. I have a real nostalgia for that. I hear 'Wonderwall' come on the radio, and I'm like, "Fucking take me back. I want to go back."

When you were shooting *Trainspotting*, did you feel as if you were making a film that would have cultural impact?

I think we did. I mean, we were so young, and so new. It was my fourth movie. I'd done *Shallow Grave*, and then I made a film with [*Peter*] Greenaway [The Pillow Book]. I think I did *Blue Juice* or something; I can't remember. Anyway, *Trainspotting* was my fourth movie. *Shallow Grave* had been massively well-received. It stood for something different. So when we came to do *Trainspotting*, I had all that expectation. I thought, 'Yeah, we're going to fucking nail it.' I could just feel it. To tackle a book about heroin addicts in Leith was probably as dangerous as you could imagine doing. And I loved it. I loved that spirit of, "Yeah, fuck it! Let's go!" >>

FIVE STAR TURNS

MCGREGOR'S MASTERSTROKES...



1 TRAINSPOTTING
1996 ★★★★★
Having worked with Danny Boyle on his dark 1994 thriller *Shallow Grave*, the 24-year-old McGregor – then in a "brilliant, youthful, ruling the world kind of mood" – was happy to shed 30 pounds, and his hair, to play heroin addict Mark Renton in his landmark adaptation of Irvine Welsh's junkie classic.



2 VELVET GOLDMINE
1998 ★★★★
Playing hard-living American singer Curt Wild – a flamboyant amalgam of Iggy Pop, Lou Reed and Kurt Cobain – in Todd Haynes' glam-rock oddity gave McGregor a chance to live out his dreams of music stardom. "I thought it would expel the rock 'n' roll demons but it just put more in me," he admits.



3 MOULIN ROUGE!
2001 ★★★★
"It felt like we were in a circus," says McGregor of Baz Luhrmann's epic musical, a riot of colour and craziness that not only saw the actor share tender love scenes with Nicole Kidman but also led to them spending three weeks in the Top 40 with the David Baerwald-penned ballad 'Come What May'.



4 BIG FISH 2003 ★★★★
Having played the young Alec Guinness in two *Star Wars* prequels, McGregor was well-primed to play a youthful Albert Finney in Tim Burton's fantastical shaggy-dog story. "I was playing somebody's memory of himself, where he's a helluva good guy and everything's through rose-tinted spectacles," he says of his "challenging" role.



5 THE IMPOSSIBLE
2012 ★★★★
Naomi Watts may have got an Oscar nod for J.A. Bayona's harrowing recreation of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, but it was McGregor who arguably did the heavy lifting as the dad toiling to piece his shattered family together. (The father-of-four calls the film his "first real exploration of parenthood".) **NS**

Does the 20-year gap since *Trainspotting* make the project more interesting?
Yeah. It's so funny, because I was talking about how unusual that was, and then I found myself previewing [*directorial debut*] *American Pastoral* at a cinema in Pasadena recently... We watched the film in the morning and then I had the whole afternoon, so I went to see the new *Star Wars* film. I realised I'd been telling everyone how unique it was to be making a sequel 20 years after the original, and now I was watching *Star Wars*, going, 'Oh, maybe it's not quite as unique as I thought' [*laughs*].

But you must be thrilled that it's finally happening?
I have to say, the idea of being back on set with Jonny [*Miller*] and Bobby [*Carlyle*] and Ewen [*Bremner*] and Kelly [*Macdonald*]... I can't tell you how exciting that is. And also to be back on set with Danny. It's been such a long time since we worked together. And I've always sort of regretted that. For some reason or another, we didn't work together for all these years. He's one of the best directors I've ever worked with, and certainly when I think of my own work, he got some of the best work out of me that I've ever done. So I regret the movies that we didn't make together.

You fell out when DiCaprio was cast in *The Beach* after Danny had tagged you for the part. What was it that finally brought you back together?
Just time, you know? Just time and all the silly... [*Pause*] You know, there's nothing petty about it. It's just time. You just go, "Ah, let's just move on." Ten years ago, I wouldn't have been ready to do this, but now I am. And I think it's going to be extraordinary.

You touched upon *Star Wars*. Tell us about your voice cameo in *The Force Awakens*...
J.J. came to me a couple of weeks before the film was released. He just emailed me out of the blue, saying he'd love to have my voice in the film. He felt like it was important and I felt the same. I don't spend a lot of time thinking about *Star Wars* – they're three films I made a very long time ago. But when he got in touch, I thought, 'No, that would be good'. So I went down to his editing room and recorded a couple of lines.

Will you or your voice be in future episodes?
I've got no idea. I can't quite work out how I could be in them, because I would be Alec Guinness. I don't know. I don't know how they would work that. I like the idea of doing the Obi-Wan Kenobi movie between *Episodes III* and *IV*. There's obviously a story there. There's 20 years where he's in the desert after he's delivered Luke and Leia. I've always been keen to do that one. A friend of mine, who I've worked with as a director, went in to pitch a story idea to them. Nothing's come of it yet, but we'll see.

Do you rate *The Force Awakens*?
I thought it was *so* good. I felt like everyone else – he'd taken us back to the *Star Wars* that we knew and loved when we were kids.

Samuel L. Jackson criticised the lightsaber duels. You were considered the Jedi Master of lightsabers while filming the prequels. So what did *you* think?
[*Laughs*] I can't say. If I say anything to do with *Star Wars*, it becomes such a big deal. I thought they were alright, yeah. They were fine.



'DIE-HARD FANS ALWAYS GO ON ABOUT VELVET GOLDMINE. I SEE IT ON INSTAGRAM, ON TATTOOS'



The prequels were not the *Star Wars* of our childhood. Looking back, do you consider the negative reactions to be fair?
I'm very happy with the ones I was in. George was trying to tell the earlier stories. He was trying to show that we can't have a familiarity about things that we haven't seen yet. When he's trying to create the Stormtroopers, he's also showing that they were originally an army of droids. Of course, when J.J. Abrams was making his sequel, then you can have that familiarity because it's after the event. We can have the Millennium Falcon and we can have the Stormtroopers in a more advanced form. I'm very happy to be part of the legend of *Star Wars* and to have had the honour of trying to play Alec Guinness as a younger man.

What do you think of Disney making a *Star Wars* movie every year?
I don't have any feelings on it, really. I mean, it seems to me there's such a massive hunger for these kinds of movies. There is clearly a market for superhero/fantasy adventure movies. It's a shame it's at the expense of drama, and films that I like to make about people. It seems it's harder and harder to find scripts that are catering to that. That's why *American Pastoral* is such a good thing. It's a film about people in a situation.

The book is an American epic and it won the Pulitzer Prize. It's a lot to bite off for your directorial debut!
[Laughs] I'd been attached to play the leading character, the 'Swede', for eight years or so. Directors kept coming and going. A little bit like the drummer in *Spinal Tap*, they kept disappearing. I could just smell that it was going to go away. For 15 years, I've wanted to direct. I've just bottled it. So I suddenly thought, 'Shit, maybe this is it. Maybe it's right in front of my nose; the story that I should direct is here.'

How did you find the experience?
Really incredible and tense. I have such an amazing cast: Jennifer Connelly, Dakota Fanning, David Strathairn... We've locked the picture now.

LIFELINE

31 MARCH 1971
Ewan Gordon McGregor born in Perth, Scotland.

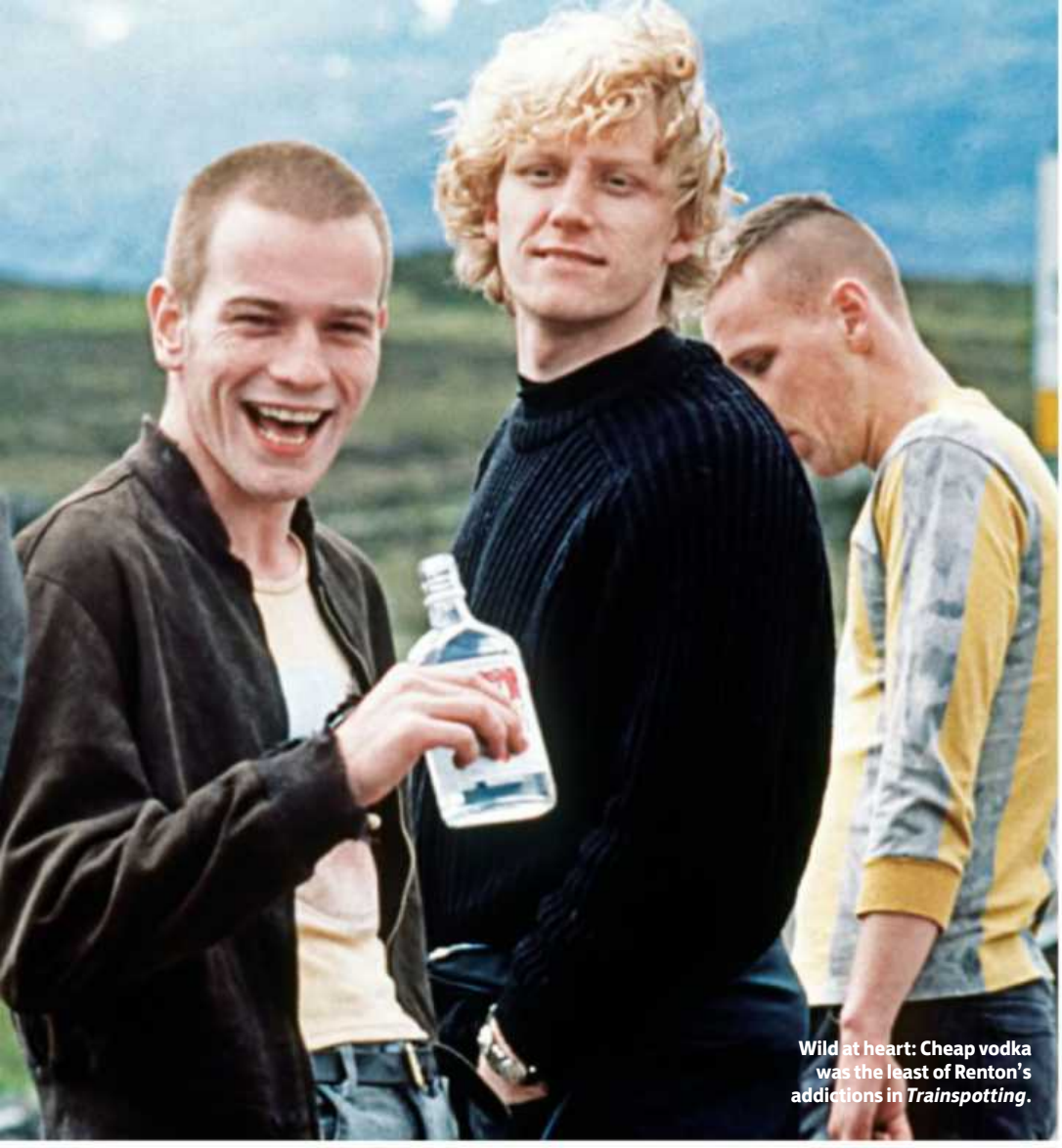
1993
Leaves Guildhall School of Music and Drama and lands role in TV's *Lipstick On Your Collar*.



1994-96
Collaborates with Danny Boyle, first in *Shallow Grave*, then in *Trainspotting* two years later.

1996-98
Confirms versatility, in Britpics such as *Emma*, *Brassed Off* and *A Life Less Ordinary*.

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Wild at heart: Cheap vodka was the least of Renton's addictions in *Trainspotting*.

ALLSTAR

I'm really happy with it. I'm still waiting to start work with Alexandre Desplat, who's going to do the music for us.

How did you find directing *and* acting?

I lived and breathed that story for almost a year before we started shooting, so I didn't have to think much about playing the 'Swede'; I knew him inside out. I found that directing from the middle of the scene was quite a good place to do it from. I made sure I always rehearsed with the actors alone. I just cleared the set. We would always rehearse and block each scene on our own. Because there was no director [*laughs*]... Because *I* was the director, and also the 'Swede', it became very inclusive. We put these scenes together ourselves in an empowering way. The last thing that we actors like is to be told what to do – "You're over here."

You've done all genres, all sizes. How do you select your projects?

I would never do a film I didn't like because it was being directed by someone great. But at the same time, you want to be working with great directors. But I continue to work with first-timers. I'm still happy to take that plunge with somebody. It's quite exciting being with someone who's directing for the first time, especially now that I know how they feel. [*Laughs*] I'll be more sympathetic in future.

Do you ever do films for the cash?

It's always the script first. Even the big ones that people assume you're doing for the cash... if the script doesn't grab me in some way, if I don't think there's something to do with the character, I wouldn't do them. It's too personal. You have to put something of yourself in everything that you do. Even *Jack The Giant Killer* – the character appealed to me. I thought he was funny. A blustery Errol Flynn character. I'd never done that before. I thought, 'I think I've got him in me.' And then, of course, if Woody Allen [Cassandra's Dream] gets on the phone, or Roman Polanski [The Ghost] gets on the phone, there's an added layer of, 'Well, fuck! Wouldn't it be amazing to work with them?'

Are there any films on your CV that you feel didn't get the love they deserved? *Velvet Goldmine*, perhaps?

Ah, yes. There are lots of films that don't get the audience that you would hope. But the funny thing is, they end up having a special place in your heart, and in the people-who-like-the-movie's hearts. *Velvet Goldmine* is one of the films that I get real die-hard fans always going on about. I see it on Instagram. I've seen tattoos of it. There's something very special about it. And there's another film: *Stay*, with Ryan Gosling and Naomi Watts. That film wasn't seen by anybody. It's an interesting, experimental, odd movie. I thought it was cool. But that's it. I want my films to be seen and liked and touch people, but I don't look at box-office figures. That's more a producer's game than mine.

***Moulin Rouge!* is a movie that many took to their hearts. You've just shot another musical, *Beauty And The Beast*. Was that fun?**

Well, you know, my actual physical presence in that movie is very limited because we only appear at the very end. We're animated characters through most of the movie. So we recorded all the dialogue. But I enjoyed it. It was nice working with Bill [*Condon, director*] and Sir Ian McKellen and Emma Thompson. We had a great time on set. It was fun. The four days that we were there were a real party.

And we'll again hear you belting out a tune...

Yeah. 'Be Our Guest' – that's a big number. I enjoyed it.

Finally, we have to touch on Bond. Your name has been mentioned. Did playing the spy game in *Our Kind Of Traitor* pique your interest?

Yeah. I would absolutely be interested. It would be kind of cool to be Bond [*laughs*]. But it's not really on my radar. If it crops up, it crops up. But I don't know if I've missed my moment. I might be too... I don't like to use the word, but I might be too old for it now.

You were at drama school with Daniel Craig. Have you not given him a nudge?

Daniel Craig was the year above me. Damian Lewis was the year below me. Daniel's done a great job with Bond. I'm not sure [*what will happen*]. They might be doing something very different with it. They might make him younger. Who knows? The phone hasn't rung yet, so we'll see. TF

***Our Kind Of Traitor* opens on 13 May. *Beauty And The Beast* opens on 17 March 2017. *Porno* and *American Pastoral* open TBC.**

1999
Lands biggest role to date as the young Obi-Wan Kenobi in *The Phantom Menace*.



2004
Travels from London to New York on motorcycle for *Long Way Down* TV series and book.

2005
Works with Tim Burton and Michael Bay, as well as wrapping up the *Star Wars* trilogy.



2016
Post-production on *American Pastoral*. *Miles Ahead*, *Jane Got A Gun* and *Our Kind Of Traitor* released.

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EDITED BY
MATTHEW LEYLAND

Lounge

The Total Film home entertainment bible

★★★★★ First class
★★★★ Catches fire
★★★ Has its silver lining
★★ Not worth the hustle
★ Apocalypse

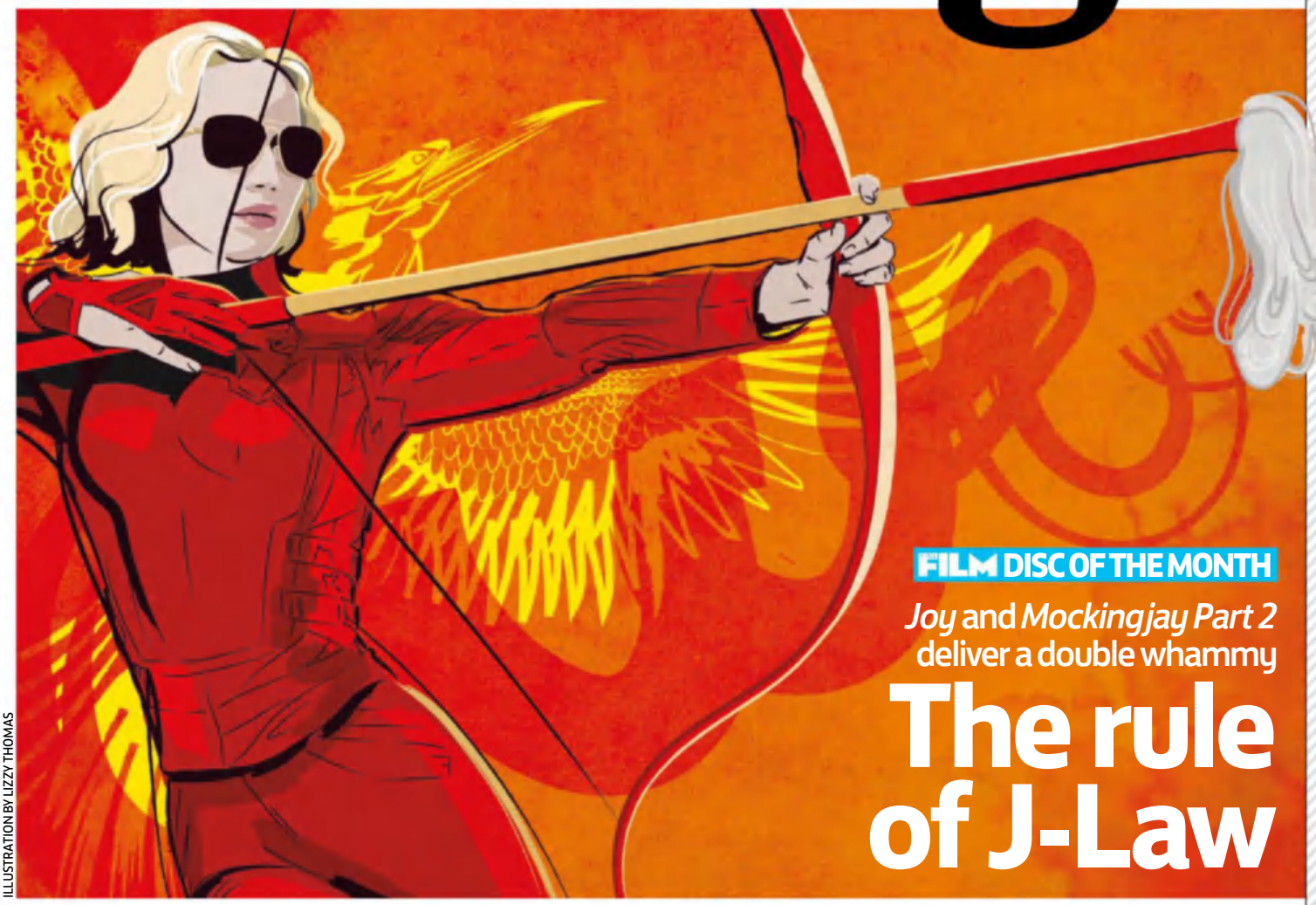


ILLUSTRATION BY LIZZY THOMAS

FILM DISC OF THE MONTH

Joy and *Mockingjay Part 2* deliver a double whammy

The rule of J-Law

NEW RELEASES 08.04.16 – 05.05.16

Lounge DVD & Blu-ray

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All Quiet On The Western Front	★★★★	p135
A Serious Man	★★★★	p134
Autumn Almanac	★★★★	p134
American Horror Project	★★★	p133
Among The Living	★★	p131
Bande A Part	★★★★	p135
Barton Fink	★★★★★	p134
Batman/Superman The Movie	★★★★	p133
Being John Malkovich	★★★★★	p134
Bridge Of Spies	★★★★	p131
Burn After Reading	★★★★	p134
Burnt	★★★	p131
Cape Fear	★★★★★	p135
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N/A Extras not available at time of going to press

The *Game* is afoot on p136





In the company of Jen

Two films, two wildly different styles, one great star...

THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY – PART 2 12



Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★★☆ **OUT NOW** DVD, BD, 3D BD, STEELBOOK, DIGITAL HD

JOY 12



Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★☆☆ **OUT NOW** DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

CONSIDER: A SMALL-TOWN GIRL, thrown into the limelight. She must perform for the cameras, stand her ground against advisers and deal with the agenda of the powers that be. All she has is her guile, her determination to do right by her family, and her weapon of choice.

Put like that, the latter is the only thing that separates Jennifer Lawrence's two most recent characters. Katniss Everdeen favours a bow and arrow; Joy Mangano prefers the Miracle Mop. Yet watching *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2* and *Joy* together, it's clear that the actress can thrive in any arena.

Lawrence now has serious rivals as her generation's greatest actress, not least 2016's Oscar winners Brie Larson and Alicia Vikander. As a star, though, she's way ahead. These films, conspicuously fashioned around that persona of steely resolve, help to explain why. Intriguingly, each film represents J-Law's third collaboration with the directors she's most associated with, Francis Lawrence and David O. Russell. That their respective approaches are so different highlights how mercurial the actress has become.

In his final *Hunger Games* outing, Francis Lawrence shoots tight, almost making a mockery of the lavish production design by preferring to capture his namesake's suspicious, conflicted face as Katniss becomes a reluctant pawn in the battle between rebel leader Alma Coin (Julianne Moore) and vicious President Snow (Donald Sutherland). In contrast, Russell unleashes a galloping hybrid of melodrama, screwball comedy and corporate thriller, as his pinball staging throws obstacles in Joy's path as she battles to make her invention a success. If anything, Joy is more formidable than Katniss, facing down opponents with a hard stare that would make Paddington blush.

Tunnel vision

Both are proper, Norma Desmond-sized performances of the kind so often neglected in modern Hollywood. Lawrence holds her own against high-calibre performers: Moore, Sutherland and the late Philip Seymour

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Leading lady: standing up for the people of Panem in *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2* (main) and standing up for her father in *Joy*.

'Watching these two films together makes it clear that Jennifer Lawrence can thrive in any arena'

Hoffman in *Mockingjay – Part 2*; Robert De Niro and Bradley Cooper in *Joy*. And she's ambitious enough to warp expectations: here, it's the blockbuster that delivers the dark drama and the Oscar-nommed prestige pic that crackles with comedy.

Somehow, *THG:M–2* feels like an underdog, eclipsed on release by the supernovas of *SPECTRE* and *The Force Awakens*. That's an odd sensation considering that *The Hunger Games* has been one of the decade's rare hits to chime with critics and audiences alike, but it surely owes something to Lawrence's ability to locate the fragility within her heroine. Especially when watched in sequence with its predecessors – and the entire saga is also available as a four-film set – Lawrence never lets Katniss become a superhero.

By blockbuster standards – especially compared to the thunderous battle royales in the *Harry Potter* and *Hobbit* finales – this is an unusual send-off, its dogged, behind-enemy-lines narrative lacking any fist-pumping triumphalism. Indeed, aside from a frightening set-piece in claustrophobic tunnels that pushes the boundaries of the 12-certificate, the action largely makes way for world-weary musings on politics and war. It's a collection of brave ideas and noble sentiments that only occasionally coheres as gripping drama, but absolutely right for Katniss' journey. It's doubtful the producers would have kept faith in Suzanne Collins' bittersweet source novel were it not for Lawrence's nuanced depiction of a dystopian Scarlett O'Hara.

She who dares

The actress' old-school appeal is even clearer in *Joy*, as Russell perfects the promise of previous collaborations *Silver Linings Playbook* and *American Hustle*. Cheekily, the opening caption reckons to be "inspired by the true stories of daring women. One in particular." That's an acknowledgement that this most zig-zaggy of directors wasn't to be hamstrung by the facts of Mangano's life, but it's also an admission that (despite great work by Virginia Madsen, Diane Ladd and Isabella Rossellini), this is very much The Jennifer Lawrence Show.

Controversially, Russell dismissed a more conventional screenplay by *Bridesmaids*' co-creator Annie Mumolo to refashion Joy's life as a parable of American womanhood. A feminist *Citizen Kane*? That's a lofty ambition and the result is understandably uneven, as Russell and his four (!) editors swap tones and genres. The film's stylings as a bizarre soap opera-cum-fairytale feel contrived, but with Lawrence at her most charismatic, visibly bristling at the shackles, it's only a matter of time before the story lands. When a boat trip goes awry and Joy cuts her hands mopping blood off Rossellini's prize teakwood deck, she gets a brainwave.

From here, the film fires ideas and follows plot threads at will. There are strands about the consumerist impulses behind the American dream, the perilous state of relying on family for advice (an old Russell favourite) and even hints of *A Star Is Born* in Joy's relationship with Cooper's mentor figure. Like the mop itself, these strands are woven only loosely together but – as in *Mockingjay – Part 2* – it doesn't matter when Lawrence is the one who is wielding it. No wonder the odds continue to be in her favour.

Big extras: *Joy* includes a 70-min Lawrence/Russell on-stage Q&A, while the *THG:M–2* Blu-ray offers a Making Of running a whopping 140 mins; though a fair chunk of that is heart-on-sleeve wrap-party speeches. **Simon Kinnear**

EXTRAS › ***Joy*** › **Q&A** › **Featurette**
THG: M2 › **Commentary (BD)** › **Making Of (BD)** › **Featurettes**


Apple and Microsoft weren't too worried about his new computer.

Shock value

Peter Sarsgaard pushes buttons...

EXPERIMENTER 12



Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★☆☆☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

SELF-AWARENESS CAN STIFLE a film, but in the case of Michael Almereyda's alt-biopic it's bang on the money. With the dial marked 'meta' cranked to 11, Almereyda (1994's *Nadja*, 2000's *Hamlet*) cannily explores blind obedience in a manner demanding questioning responses. Fourth walls break, backdrops are brazenly faked: and as a film experiment about experiments emerges, twists on biopic cliché (and random elephant cameos) keep it from calcifying in smart-arsed self-importance.

The experimenter is famous psychologist Stanley Milgram (Peter Sarsgaard), who in 1961 coerced volunteers to test others with memory questions. Most questioners complied when asked to issue electro-shocks (increasing in voltage) for every fluffed answer, not knowing the 'victim' was an actor. By exploring people's willingness to administer pain under lab-coated instruction, Milgram raised spiky questions about authority and deferred ethics; Sarsgaard's to-camera voiceover rams the Holocaust theme home.

Milgram's subjects (including Taryn Manning and Anton Yelchin) and wife (a top-form Winona Ryder) brim with life, yet he remains remote, deliberately so: Milgram's detachment keeps us inquisitive, a response galvanised by ideas about means and ends, career and character, deceit and discipline.

Frisky formal tricks chivvy the plot along, as do deliciously droll comic diversions including a JFK episode and a William Shatner movie about Milgram. Sarsgaard's Milgram despairs of Shatner's film. But you suspect he'd be happier with Almereyda's playful interrogation: a direct-to-disc teaser worth seeking out. **Kevin Harley**

EXTRAS › **Gag reel**



SISTERS 15

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★★☆

OUT 25 APRIL DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

THE '80S HOUSE PARTY SUBGENRE gets a midlife makeover in *Sisters*, which reunites Tina Fey and Amy Poehler as fortysomething siblings who decide to have one last celebratory blowout before their childhood home is sold. The duo's rapport is key, and it's refreshing to see Fey play against type as the wild child. There are a handful of brilliant laugh-out-loud moments and consistent reasons to smirk, but it's an ultimately patchy affair that's only really uproarious during the party itself. It feels a lot like Fey and Poehler are elevating material not quite worthy of their talents. **Matt Maytum**

EXTRAS › **Extended cut (BD)** › **Gag Reel** › **Commentaries** › **Deleted/extended (BD) scenes** › **Improvorama** › **Featurettes (BD)**



VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN 12

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras N/A

OUT 11 APRIL DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

UNDER-PROMOTED AND OVERLY criticised on release, *Victor Frankenstein* fell under the radar and under box-office expectation. But Max Landis' reimagining is a perfectly entertaining small-screen watch. In Frankenstein (James McAvoy in manic form) is a socially inept dick kept in moral check by his former- circus-freak sidekick, Igor (Daniel Radcliffe) as the duo try to reanimate corpses. Jessica Brown Findlay adds little in a romantic sideline, especially as *Sherlock* director Paul McGuigan is more interested in replicating the Cumberbatch/Freeman emotional dynamic, complete with Andrew Scott's cock-blocking adversary. Derivative but diverting. **Jane Crowther**

EXTRAS › **N/A**



THE NIGHT BEFORE 15

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

IT'S A CASE OF BROS BEFORE HO HO HOS in *The Night Before*, as three best buds (Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Anthony Mackie and Seth Rogen) decide to bring their annual tradition of Christmas Eve revelry to a close by seeking out an almost-mythical secret shindig. The three leads have authentic chemistry, so hanging out with them is never a chore, and there's a steady supply of chuckles (and fun cameos) over the course of their incident-packed evening in New York City. Shame, then, that director Jonathan Levine doesn't quite attain the same fun/feels ratio as his *50/50*. A stingy gag reel lets down the extras. **Matt Maytum**

EXTRAS › **Making Of** › **Featurettes** › **Gag reel** › **Deleted/extended scenes (BD)**



KRAMPUS 15

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT 25 APRIL DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

CHRISTMAS COMES EARLY IN THIS festive creature feature from *Trick 'R Treat*'s Michael Dougherty. When the untarnished spirit of young Max is left in tatters after a disastrous family dinner, the titular goat-horned nega-Santa and his minions descend to teach Max the meaning of Christmas. There's more than a hint of *Gremlins* in the film's home-invasion setup as sentient gingerbread men and grotesque presents slash their way through the game cast. A derivative but welcomely twisted addition to the oft-soppy selection of Christmas-movie offerings. **Jordan Farley**

EXTRAS › **Alternate Ending (BD)** › **Commentary (BD)** › **Featurettes (BD)** › **Galleries (BD)** › **Gag reel**

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BRIDGE OF SPIES 12

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

NOT STEVEN SPIELBERG'S MOST explosive political film, but perhaps – quietly – one of his most insightful and pertinent. *Bridge Of Spies* is a slow-burn thriller about American values set against the icy backdrop of Cold War Berlin, with Tom Hanks (who has American values firmly locked down) the obdurate lawyer sticking to his guns while defending an alleged Russian agent. Mr Smith Goes To Eastern Europe, then – but it's the Oscar-winning Mark Rylance as the gentle spy himself who steals it. If the sentimental coda bugs you, blame Hanks – it was his idea, as revealed in the featurette-centric extras.

Nathan Ditum

EXTRAS › **Featurettes**



THE SURVIVALIST 18

Film ★★★★☆ Extras N/A

OUT 18 APRIL DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

PROOF THAT POST-APOCALYPTIC thrillers can do without scale, special effects or indeed zombies, Stephen Fingleton's BAFTA-nominated debut gets a great deal out of three characters, a shack and a patch of wilderness in Northern Ireland. Opening titles hint that unsustainable population growth has wreaked havoc, but all we really need to know is that the solitude of a raw-boned survivalist (Martin McCann) is disturbed when two women (Olwen Fouere, Mia Goth) arrive on his turf, needing food. A power play unfolds, terse, tense and without a shred of sentiment. Think *The Hunger Games* stripped to the bone.

Jamie Graham

EXTRAS › **N/A**



PETER DE ROME 18

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DVD

"I'VE BEEN LABELLED THE GODFATHER of gay porn, but I rather prefer the term 'grandfather'," chuckles Peter de Rome, a sweet little old man who dodders around Ramsgate, reminiscing about his career creating hardcore dick-flicks. The first porn director to see his work preserved by the BFI, de Rome's controversial productions revolutionised the genre at time when the acts his films showed could've landed him in prison. Often as inscrutable as the films themselves, Ethan Reid's documentary coasts gently along on de Rome's memories, but is nonetheless completely unafraid to fill the screen with a *lot* of penis.

Paul Bradshaw

EXTRAS › **Featurette** › **Audio interviews**



DADDY'S HOME 12

Film ★★☆☆☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT 18 APRIL DIGITAL HD **2 MAY** DVD, BD

SEAN ANDERS' FORGETTABLE FAMILY comedy pits a sensitive stepfather (Will Ferrell) against a 'wild' biological father (Mark Wahlberg) in a half-hearted battle that fails to live up to either of their best efforts. Playing it straight doesn't suit Ferrell's strengths, and although Wahlberg has proven comic chops, here he phones it in: that his defining moment in the film is a one-handed pull-up says it all. The script actually has interesting things to say about its specific family set-up, but is sadly neither coherent or entertaining enough to leave much of an impression.

Tom Bond

EXTRAS › **Making Of** › **Deleted/extended scenes** › ***Daddy-Off* featurette** › **Additional featurettes (BD)** › **Gag reel (BD)**



THE FORBIDDEN ROOM 12

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DUAL FORMAT

COMBINING THE AESTHETICS OF SILENT cinema with the avant-garde, director Guy Maddin dives deep into the rabbit hole for this surreal, spellbinding experience of a film. Comprising a series of vignettes that flow into each other with the logic of a dream, it serves up everything from a man possessed by the bust of the two-faced god Janus to an infomercial explaining the best way to take a bath. Some are unsettling in their mystery, while others are burdened by an ironic detachment from the genres they're pastiching. But overall this is cinema bursting at the seams with activity and imagination. **Stephen Puddicombe**

EXTRAS › **Commentary** › **Featurettes**



JUSTICE LEAGUE: COSMIC CLASH U

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★☆☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, BD

THIS GLEEFULLY SILLY ANIMATION ACTS as a fun, colourful chaser for Zack Snyder's live-action *League*, but is strictly for kids and hardcore DC completists only. When Brainiac (Phil LaMarr) attempts to shrink the Earth for his planet collection, Batman (Troy Baker) has to time travel to save the other League members from temporal-displacement doom. The fun is in the characters sending up their own reputations, particularly with Batman's Adam West-ian deadpan delivery, but don't be fooled – this is skewed much more to a kiddie audience than *The LEGO Movie*. One throwaway extra: an incoherent, redubbed, fake 'gag reel'.

Matt Looker

EXTRAS › **Gag reel**

The round-up

Swingers, saucepans and superfluous 'z's.

In **Burnt** (★★★, out now, DVD/BD), Bradley Cooper plays an implausible culinary wunderkind recovering from addiction and returning to the restaurant biz. There's plenty of Cooper charisma, but the film tries too hard to be edgy, working better as a sweet redemption tale...



French horror **Among The Living** (★★, out now, DVD/Digital HD) mostly favours gore and shock twists over making much sense. Starts off promisingly, plays out predictably...

Stick an unnecessary Z in your title and people expect zombies. Sadly, **Jeruzalem** (★★, out now, DVD/BD/VOD) delivers only a handful of unimpressive undead. The POV found-footage gimmick makes it feel like a Jewish *Cloverfield*: nice premise, disappointing result...

The Glasgow swinging scene beckons as a last resort for a limp relationship in offbeat drama **Swung** (★★★, out 11 April, DVD/Digital HD). Fine turns from Owen McDonnell and Elena Anaya up the curiosity value...

Candyman director Bernard Rose offers a gruesome yet surprisingly touching take on the Shelley classic in **Frankenstein** (★★★, out now, DVD/BD/Digital HD). Set in the modern day, it's told from the POV of the monster (Xavier Samuel), as much victim as aberration...

The forest fights back in tightly plotted rural Irish horror **The Hallow** (★★★, out now, DVD/Digital HD). Corin Hardy offers atmospheric direction that paints an unsettling picture...

Peggy Guggenheim: Art Addict (★★★, out now, DVD) is a pacey if not always weighty portrait of the collector whose life was as eventful as any of the artists she exhibited, patronised and had affairs with...



Before the bobble hat, head warming was a tricky endeavour.

DELICATESSEN 1991
Jeunet and Caro's feature debut, a blackly comic tale of butchery, murder and shared living.

HELLBOY 2004
Post-*City*, Ron Perlman's finest work comes as another strongman, Dark Horse's WW2-spawned demon.

THE SCIENCE OF SLEEP 2006
Another dreamy Gallic fantasy, as Gael García Bernal visits Michel Gondry's land of nod.

Dream catchers

The Delicatessen duo go to town...

THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN 15

Film ★★★★ Extras ★★★

1995 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD



A DOE-EYED CHILD WATCHES AS Santa Claus comes down the chimney. But then follows another St. Nick, and another – and three through the door – as a beautiful dream turns into a disquieting nightmare. So begins *Delicatessen* directors Marc Caro and Jean-Pierre Jeunet's second – and to date last – collaboration, *The City Of Lost Children*, a film as strange and stunning as a Salvador Dalí exhibition.

Co-written with Gilles Adrien, it's a kinetic comic-book carnival, set in a French port and driven by Ron Perlman's strongman One, who's desperate to retrieve his little brother from Krank (Daniel Emilfork), an oil-rig dwelling inventor who is stealing children's dreams. Accompanying him is orphaned girl Miette (Judith Vittet, meant to look like a cross between Olive Oyl and Minnie Mouse, explains costume designer Jean Paul Gaultier in the extras).

This only scratches the surface of a fairytale universe populated by clones, fleas, fanatics, dwarfs and even a talking brain. Partly shot by cinematographer Darius Khondji, the very same year he DP'd on David Fincher's *Se7en*, it's one of the handsomest movies in French-film history. Inspired by Terry Gilliam, its watery world is painted in murky greens and sunflower yellows, beautifully rendered in this new Blu-ray transfer.

If the emotions are sometimes buried beneath the narrative, Jeunet and Caro's oddball humour pulls you through. True, in a world populated by more freaks than a Tod Browning reunion the effect is almost overwhelming. But it's hard to begrudge any film teeming with such invention.

Extras include behind-the-scenes footage (screen tests, kids' workshop) and a 26-minute Making Of. There's also a brief interview with Gaultier, and footage from his studio as the actresses playing Siamese twins try on three-legged trousers. "It's a little over the top," says one. Well, yes – but in a (very) good way. **James Mottram**

EXTRAS › **Commentary** › **Making Of** › **Interview**

Jean-Pierre Jeunet

Lost Children's co-director talks big boats, bizarreness and language barriers...

What was your starting point?
The original intention was to make a film with a harbour and big boats. And probably because we loved comics from that period, we wanted to make a film with a girl and a tall guy. But I think it's always better to have a good story! So we had to write a story and came with a strange one – people not able to dream. For *Amélie*, I didn't make the same mistake. I started with a story!

Where did all the weirdness come from?
We put in stuff we loved from animation, from comics – everything! Also, we wanted to reproduce the London of [*illustrator*] Gustave Doré. Very important. That was a reference for Marc Caro.

Is it true Ron Perlman spoke no French?
Yes, he did not speak it at all! We had a translator, because we didn't speak English at this time – now it's a little bit better! Even when I made *Alien: Resurrection*, I didn't speak English. I understood the story when I received the DVD with subtitles! And for *City*, Ron just had one or two pages of dialogue. He was pretty quiet... **JM**



Superman, inspiration to boyband videos for a generation.

Hero sandwich

DC's finest go disc-to-disc...

BATMAN/SUPERMAN THE MOVIE 15



Films ★★★★☆ **Extras** N/A

1978/1989 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD

WITH BEN AFFLECK AND Henry Cavill currently duking it out in multiplexes, what better time to revisit Richard Donner's *Superman The Movie* (1978, ★★★★★) and Tim Burton's *Batman* (1989, ★★★★), seminal movies both?

Each film favours a camp-yet-sincere approach, with Supes (Christopher Reeve) donning red underpants over sky-blue tights and literally rescuing a cat from a tree before tackling Lex Luthor's (Gene Hackman) plan to nuke the west coast. The Bat (Michael Keaton), meanwhile, uses his "wonderful toys" to take on Joker (Jack Nicholson), a "homicidal artist" so evil he dances to Prince in an art gallery, dances to more Prince during a parade and gives away $20m to the punters of Gotham – a fraction of what the soundtrack made, by the way.

Viewed in our digital age, the mixture of wire-work, bluescreen matte techniques and front projection will have you only half-believing a man can fly, while Gotham's recreation at Pinewood Studios (where, incidentally, *Superman*'s Krypton scenes were shot) is worthy of its Art Direction Oscar but no match for Christopher Nolan's location grit. But were you to rewind time *a la* Kal-El to an era when superhero movies were rare, you'd see these films were, then, visually dazzling. Now, the most joy is found elsewhere – Superman and Lois Lane flirting ("Well, putting it delicately, can you... eat?"), say, or Burton sneaking in his love of horror by putting his Bat in a belfry for a monster finale. **Jamie Graham**

EXTRAS › **TBC**



ALLSTAR

SLEEPERS 18

Film ★★★☆☆ **Extras** ★☆☆☆☆

1996 **OUT NOW** DVD

COMPARED WITH SPOTLIGHT, BARRY Levinson's exposé of institutionalised sexual abuse wallows deeper in the grim details but comes off feeling shallow – a tidy, glossy slice of period confessional that sets its uncomfortable paedophilia tale to a John Williams score. What gives the film its weight is an exceptionally strong cast – with the heavyweight quintet of Kevin Bacon, Robert De Niro, Dustin Hoffman, Brad Pitt and Minnie Driver filling out an ensemble that spans two generations in the awful lives of New York kids suffering prison, abuse and decades of injustice after a stupid prank goes wrong. **Paul Bradshaw**

EXTRAS › **None**



AMERICAN HORROR PROJECT 18

Film ★★★☆☆ **Extras** ★★★★☆

1973-76 **OUT NOW** DUAL FORMAT

ARROW'S MISSION TO RELEASE unheralded gems from America's golden age of terror ('68-'78) begins with a six-disc boxset containing *Malatesta's Carnival Of Blood*, *The Witch Who Came From The Sea* and *The Premonition*, plus a glut of extras. The titles are hardly overlooked masterpieces but all three are of interest, unleashing such genre staples as cannibals and the occult while also exploring themes like loneliness, sexual abuse and mental health. Their loose-change budgets and often-amateur technique only add to the woozy atmosphere. **Jamie Graham**

EXTRAS › **Commentaries** › **Featurettes** › **Interviews** › **Outtakes**



ROCCO AND HIS BROTHERS 15

Film ★★★★★ **Extras** ★★★☆☆

1960 **OUT NOW** BD

FOLLOWING THE OPERATIC CLASHES of the Pandori brothers as they quit the rural South for sinful Milan, Luchino Visconti's gloriously overwrought epic is the three-hour embodiment of 'Go big or go home'. Neo-realism and violent melodrama combine masterfully for a fierce emotional intensity. Alain Delon's do-right Rocco made him a star, yet it's Renato Salvatori's hothead boxer and Annie Girardot's tragic hooker who leap out of the screen. Meticulously restored, this package reinstates footage censored on release, and crams in well-picked newsreel and doco extras. **Kate Stables**

EXTRAS › **Documentaries** › **Interviews** › **Newsreels** › **Booklet**



ALLSTAR

THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE AND HER LOVER 18

Film ★★★★★ **Extras** ★☆☆☆☆

1989 **OUT NOW** DVD

"MONEY'S MY BUSINESS, EATING'S MY pleasure," leers Michael Gambon's restaurant-going gangster Albert Spica in Peter Greenaway's modern Jacobean revenge tragedy. But when he discovers trophy wife Helen Mirren's infidelity, will he make good on his threat to kill and eat her bookish lover? Simultaneously very '80s and a disgusted comment on that savage, avaricious decade, this is Greenaway truly having his cake and eating it. With its stunning tracking shots, luscious colour-coding and full-on sex and violence, every scene's perfectly designed to shock or awe. **Ali Catterall**

EXTRAS › **None**


Her jazz-hands had opened an interdimensional rift.

Sing treat

There's no boxset like this boxset...

MUST-SEE MUSICALS: 10 FILM COLLECTION PG



Boxset ★★★★★ **Extras** ★★★★☆

1933-62 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD

LOVINGLY SPOOFED BY THE COEN brothers in *Hail, Caesar!*, the big-budget Hollywood musical still carries all before it in terms of energy, spectacle and pizzazz. Of the 10 in this boxset, five stem from the Arthur Freed unit at MGM, but they've all got glories and glitz to spare.

First up chronologically, *42nd Street* (1933, ★★★★) defies the Depression blues with Busby Berkeley's jazzy mass choreography. First of the Freed productions is *Meet Me In St. Louis* (1944, ★★★★★) – Judy Garland at her most poignant. Also from Freed, *Easter Parade* (1948, ★★★★) teams Garland with Fred Astaire for classy hoofing to Irving Berlin numbers; *Annie Get Your Gun* (1950, ★★★★) finds sharpshootin' Betty Hutton in a Wild West face off with Howard Keel; *Singin' In The Rain* (1952, ★★★★★) has Gene Kelly in at the birth of sound movies in what for many is the greatest musical ever; and *The Band Wagon* (1953, ★★★★), another backstager, matches Astaire with a spectacular Cyd Charisse.

Calamity Jane (1953, ★★★★) virtually reruns *Annie*, with Doris Day facing Keel. *A Star Is Born* (1954, ★★★★★) digs deeper than most, as Judy Garland reaches for stardom while husband James Mason sinks into alcohol. *High Society* (1956, ★★★★) musicalises *The Philadelphia Story* to classy effect courtesy of Cole Porter; and in *Gypsy* (1962, ★★★★) Natalie Wood as stripper Gypsy Rose Lee is steamrollered off the screen by Rosalind Russell as her mum. Lavish extras, not least a nine-person commentary on *Singin'* – cast, filmmakers, the lot. **Philip Kemp**

EXTRAS › **Intros** › **Commentaries** › **Featurettes** › **Deleted scenes** › **Newsreels** › **Shorts** › **Cartoons**



AUTUMN ALMANAC 15

Film ★★★★☆ **Extras** ★☆☆☆☆

1984 **OUT NOW** DVD

WHILE THIS EARLY FILM FROM BÉLA Tarr is considerably shorter than his arthouse epic *Satantango* (1994), it's no less challenging or arresting. Set entirely in one decrepit house, it follows the five occupants as they fight, fall in and out of love and give long, despairing monologues on their lives. Bleak? For sure, but Tarr's exacting style conjures a trance-like mood through his slowly prowling camerawork and vivid, unrealistic use of colour. Whether viewed as an allegory for Communist life or a fable of existential dread, the powerful effect is akin to being trapped in a dramatic labyrinth. **Simon Kinnear**

EXTRAS › **None**



COEN BROTHERS TRIPLE 15

Films See Below **Extras** ★★☆☆☆

1991-2009 **OUT NOW** DVD (separately)

A TRIO OF INDIVIDUAL DVD RE-ISSUES from siblings Joel and Ethan. Two are quintessential Coen: the Cannes-winning 1991 tale *Barton Fink* (★★★★★), starring John Turturro as the titular 1940s leftwing playwright trying to make a difference as he pens a Wallace Beery wrestling picture; and 2009's *A Serious Man* (★★★★), an equally surreal return to the bros' '60s Jewish Minnesotan roots with Michael Stuhlbarg as a tormented suburbanite. The all-star *Burn After Reading* (★★★★), a CIA caper with George Clooney, Brad Pitt and an uncomfortable-looking sex toy, is more knockabout but still expertly handled (the film, not the toy). **James Mottram**

EXTRAS › **Featurettes**



FIXED BAYONETS! PG

Film ★★★★☆ **Extras** ★★★☆☆

1951 **OUT NOW** DUAL FORMAT

"THE PRIMARY MOTIVE," SAID DIRECTOR Sam Fuller, "as in all my war movies, is survival, not heroism." His first film for a major studio (Fox), *Bayonets* is set in a mountain pass during the Korean War, with a small platoon left behind to hold off the enemy while the division retreats. Fuller's cynical realism – drawn from his own wartime experience – pervades the whole movie. No grand speeches – just men grimly getting on with a doomed assignment. Richard Basehart is tormented as the corporal who dreads leadership devolving on him, while a young James Dean shows up briefly right at the end. **Philip Kemp**

EXTRAS › **Commentary** › **Booklet** › **Stills gallery**



BEING JOHN MALKOVICH 15

Film ★★★★★ **Extras** ★★★☆☆

1999 **OUT NOW** DVD

THIS WAS THE MOVIE THAT FIRST plunged us into the bizarre, surreal world of screenwriter – later director – Charlie Kaufman. Directed by Spike Jonze, it has John Cusack as a down-on-his-luck street puppeteer forced to take an office job, Cameron Diaz having a bad hair day as his wife and Catherine Keener as Cusack's co-worker when he finds a hidden portal that leads straight into the head of John Malkovich. Soon he and Keener are renting out 15-minute trips inside the actor's head. And then Malkovich himself wants to try it.... Subversive, deranged and sheer delight from start to finish. **Philip Kemp**

EXTRAS › **Featurettes** › **Stills gallery** › **Bios**

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A KISS BEFORE DYING 15

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★☆☆☆☆

1991 **OUT NOW** DVD

YOU GET TWO SEAN YOUNGS FOR the price of one in this pulpy adap of Ira Levin's novel about a homicidal social climber (Matt Dillon) who, having thrown one sister off a tall building, sets his sights on her identical twin. (Two too many Sean Youngs for some, among them the Razzie voters who gave her two prizes for her pains.) It's a loopy premise to which director James Dearden gives a floridly Hitchcockian treatment, right down to a shower scene, artificial back projection and Bernard Herrmann-esque score. The result? A guilty pleasure that can be enjoyed and tittered at in equal measure. **Neil Smith**

EXTRAS › **None**



ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT PG

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★☆☆☆☆

1930 **OUT NOW** DVD

"I FOUND A WAY TO GET YOU A HAPPY ending," said director Lewis Milestone when his bosses at Universal balked at the downbeat tone of his proposed adap of Erich Maria Remarque's anti-WW1 novel. "The Germans win!" It was the film of course that ended up the victor, its hard-nosed account of a callow soldat (Lew Ayres) brutalised and traumatised by senseless trench combat earning Best Picture and Director Oscars. Modern audiences might find the pacing slow, its message self-evident and the American accents jarring. Not for nothing, though, has pretty much every war movie since mirrored its structure. **Neil Smith**

EXTRAS › **None**



BANDE À PART PG

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★★☆

1964 **OUT NOW** BD

THREE YOUNG OUTSIDERS ENTANGLED in a love triangle (Anna Karina, Claude Brasseur and Sami Frey) wander Paris contemplating whether to carry out a robbery. Jean-Luc Godard's iconic caper is not as thrillingly original as the auteur at his best, but neither is it as off-puttingly detached as his most maddening work. It resonates most as a slice of effortlessly cool '60s chic, one that peaks in the famous cafe dance sequence. That scene and the race through the Louvre have secured the film's place in cine-history – which is expanded upon at length in the scholarly extras. **Stephen Puddicombe**

EXTRAS › **Commentary** › **Interviews** › **Short film** › **Booklet**



UNDERGROUND 15

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★★★

1995 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD

THE YUGOLSLAV WARS AND THE FATE of Yugoslavia might not be as topical as when *Underground* was first released in 1995, but Emir Kusturica's sprawling account of the history of the now-disbanded nation from WW2 to civil war – told through the eyes of two heavy drinking, womanising friends – remains as extravagant as it is provocative. There's more than a hint of Fellini in the perpetual partying and tragicomic spectacles, while political allegories simmer throughout. This excellent package includes an insightful booklet, a feature length Making Of and a re-worked six-part adap for TV. **Stephen Puddicombe**

EXTRAS › **Alternative versions** › **Making Of** › **Interviews** › **Booklet**

ALLSTAR



CAPE FEAR 15

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★☆☆☆

1962 **OUT NOW** DVD, DIGITAL HD

NOT MANY FILMS CAN BE REMADE BY both Martin Scorsese and *The Simpsons* and still come out on top. Yet J. Lee Thompson's thriller remains definitive; De Niro and Sideshow Bob are no match for Robert Mitchum's vengeful ex-con Max Cady, one of Hollywood's most chilling villains. Cady's campaign of psychological terror against straight-arrow Gregory Peck mutates into a savage, ironic upturning of law and order that plays like the greatest Hitchcock film Hitchcock never made. From the post-*Psycho* shock factor to Bernard Herrmann's menacing score, Thompson steals wholesale from the Master Of Suspense's playbook and pretty much matches him. **Simon Kinnear**

EXTRAS › **Making Of** › **Production notes**



THE WOLFMAN 15

Film ★★☆☆☆ Extras ★★☆☆☆

2010 **OUT NOW** DVD

SOMETIMES, PRE-PRODUCTION scars won't fade. Despite director Mark Romanek's departure, Universal's monster reboot had a sturdy stand-in (Joe Johnston) and cast: Emily Blunt, Benicio Del Toro, Anthony Hopkins. Yet as Benicio's thesp returns to his family's wolf-worried estate, the tonal leash slips. The wolf attacks roar, dinner scenes bore; Blunt is BBC proper, hammy Hopkins flagrantly improper. A disengaged Del Toro, meanwhile, nods off (in this extended cut) nattering to Max von Sydow on a train: clearly, playing a hairy growler didn't stretch him. The fire-licked final fight is nicely OTT, but this beast's wounds run too deep for repair. **Kevin Harley**

EXTRAS › **Deleted scenes**



DEEP RED 18

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★★☆

1975 **OUT 2 MAY** BD

DARIO ARGENTO'S ROME-SET GIALLO – the film he made directly before masterpiece *Suspicious* – puts an ultraviolent spin on Antonioni's *Blow-Up*, with David Hemmings again turning amateur sleuth after witnessing a murder. This being Argento, there are more grisly killings to come, each one preceded by a kinetic, suspenseful set-piece. The reveal, meanwhile, is one of horror cinema's great scares. Arrow here resurrect the fact-packed commentary by Argento expert Thomas Rostock that's on the 2011 Blu, but the real sell is the spectacular 4K restoration. Never have the reds been so deep. **Jamie Graham**

EXTRAS › **Commentary** › **Interviews** › **Video essay**



MICHAEL COLLINS 15

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

1996 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

NEIL JORDAN BRINGS A GRAND historic sweep to his account of the lost hero of Irish independence (played by Liam Neeson at his most passionate), who started out fighting the British only to be brought down at age 31 by his own compatriots. Neeson gives a rousing performance, wholly credible as the inspired guerrilla leader who forced the Brits to the negotiating table. And if Julia Roberts seems a bit adrift as the love of Collins' life, there's a chillingly devious showing from the much-missed Alan Rickman as Eamon de Valera, his sometime ally and eventual nemesis. **Philip Kemp**

EXTRAS › **Commentary** › **Intro** › **Documentary** › **Deleted scenes**



TV

Uncharted territory

On set and off book with the massive *Game Of Thrones: Season 6*...

"THE SITUATION," SAYS Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, "is disturbing." He's just emerged from filming in a dungeon beneath Shane's Castle, a 14th-Century ruin in County Antrim. In that dungeon were his sister Cersei (Lena Headey), her personal Doctor Frankenstein Qyburn (Anton Lesser) and the monster he has created on her behalf, a 6' 9" armour-clad colossus known in the series as The Mountain, played by Norwegian strongman Hafþór Júlíus Björnsson. For *Game Of Thrones: Season 6*, The Mountain has been modified and improved by Qyburn's magic. That's why Coster-Waldau and his character Jaime Lannister find the situation disturbing – Qyburn has created some kind of unstoppable hybrid monster.

'Unstoppable hybrid monster' is an apt description for *Game Of Thrones*. Over five series HBO's fantasy epic has grown to gargantuan proportions, not only in viewing figures but in scope. This year, three units have been filming simultaneously, in effect making three shows at a time and combining them into one. One battle scene took a month to shoot. The budgets are at movie-blockbuster level.

"It's insane," says Coster-Waldau, removing his cloak and leaning back on a crenellated wall overlooking a lake, before giving an example of just how big season six is. "Jaime goes on a trip to the Riverlands where they built the castle of Riverrun," he reveals. "Our crew built this whole massive drawbridge – just for an episode and a half. Even on a big, big movie you'd go, 'Surely there must be another way to do this.' But they did it. And it blew my mind!"

Season six marks another landmark for the show – it will be the first time that it has gone entirely 'off book', going beyond the source material of George R.R. Martin's *A Song Of Ice And Fire* series. For the first time, fans of the show have absolutely no idea what is going to happen – which for a show famous for they-didn't-just-do-that-did-they? storyline whammies, adds a whole new layer of unpredictability.



Blind ambition: a sightless Arya (Maisie Williams) in Braavos and (above) Jaime Lannister (Nikolaj Coster-Waldau) with sister Cersei (Lena Headey).

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Game changer: A sombre-looking Davos Seaworth (Liam Cunningham), (below) Bran Stark (Isaac Hempstead Wright) has grown a bit since we last saw him at the end of season 4, and Sansa (Sophie Turner) and Theon (Alfie Allen) at Winterfell.





"This is the second phase of the story," teases writer/supervising producer Bryan Cogman. "Season five left all of our main characters in very vulnerable, dangerous and dark positions – those that survived. This is about picking up the pieces. This is the aftermath."

Scheme queen

Lena Headey's Cersei Lannister was one of those who survived season five, but only just. In a standout set-piece that was every bit as powerful as some of the blood-and-thunder battle scenes, Cersei ended the season being paraded naked through the streets of King's Landing. Pelted with insults and excrement, she carried out this so-called Walk of Shame in atonement for her (admittedly many) sins. This season, needless to say, she comes out fighting.

"She's at her scheming best," says Headey, sheltering from the rain under a makeshift gazebo. "Everything that's thrown at her, every fuck-up she does, she learns from and gets stronger. She is driven by fury – it's pretty intense this year. And she's got Frankenstein as her right-hand man!" She points at Hafþór Júlíus Björnsson, who's chowing down on a sandwich. "It's a bit like Alice down the rabbit hole at this point. I feel she's jumped in with Qyburn wholesale, and whatever happens she's just going to hustle and take charge. I really can't say anything, but it genuinely is the most ferocious and exciting that *Game Of Thrones* has been."

Need to Snow

That "can't say anything" is a constant refrain – it's a struggle to get access to the *Game Of Thrones* set and when you do, the cast and crew are more wary of spoilers than ever. In part this is because the show has gone off book, but also because it relies so much on surprise for its effect. "The reason we're protective," says Cogman, "is we'd love the audience to experience the highs and lows and the thrills as the characters are experiencing them." He pauses. "You know what it is? It's the feeling we got when we first read the books. We didn't have the Red Wedding spoiled for us because only a few people at that time knew about it. You have that incredible rush of emotion. I threw the book across the room. We want that for our audience."

The throw-the-remote-control-across-the-room-spoiler-of-spoilers is, of course, whether or not Jon Snow (Kit Harington) will be returning. At the close of last season he lay in a pool of blood, and Harington has said his character is dead. But he was spotted in Belfast last year and the rumour mill hasn't stopped whirring since. And so just before *Lounge* leaves Shane's Castle, we sneak up to Nikolaj Coster-Waldau and ask him the biggest question of all. "I could tell you. But I'd have to kill you," he laughs. And as he's got a three-foot broadsword clanking by his side, we decide it's probably not worth the scoop... **Benji Wilson**

ETA | 25 APRIL *Game Of Thrones: Season 6* begins on Sky Atlantic this month.

ON DEMAND

The pick of the films and shows to stream and download this month...



The high heels may have proven the biggest sartorial mistake in a blockbuster since Joel Schumacher nipped up the Bat-suit, but *Jurassic World* (2015, ★★★★) was still a roaring success – and now it's available on Sky Movies On Demand. Tune in the weekend 9-10 April and you can watch its three predecessors, from the ground-breaking original (1993, ★★★★★) to the water-treading threequel (2001, ★★★). Also on Sky: enjoyably plotless sequel *Magic Mike XXL* (2015, ★★★), enjoyably formulaic fight-flick *Southpaw* (2015, ★★★) and *Pixels* (2015, ★), which you'll enjoy leaving the little ones to watch when you want 90 mins to yourself.

Returning TV Series Of The Month is *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, with season two of Ellie Kemper's post-doomsday cult adventures set to debut in full on Netflix on 15 April. If you're a fan of DreamWorks 'toons, meanwhile, the streaming service has a great chunk of the back catalogue, including all the *Shrek* films (apart from the original, oddly). Watch: *Megamind* (2010, ★★★★). Avoid: *Shark Tale* (2004, ★★).

Sticking with animation, the biggest new addition to Amazon's Prime Video service is *Frozen* (2013, ★★★★), which is available now. And on 10 April Amazon will have the first episode from the second season of *Outlander*, a mere day after the show, which says it's about time travel but is actually about sex, debuts on US TV.





Five stars: Slade (Lee Ingleby) shares a happy moment with Pru (Sarah Solemani) while Mark (Tom Cullen, below) reflects.

TV

Vanishing act

Five things you need to know about thriller show The Five...

1 It's bestselling author Harlan Coben's first series

"I don't want to make just a TV show," reveals Coben (*Tell No One*). "I want to make something legendary." Collaborating with Brit screenwriter Danny Brocklehurst (*Clocking Off*, *Exile*), Coben's typically breathless 10-part thriller follows Mark (Tom Cullen), Pru (Sarah Solemani), Danny (O.T. Fagbenle) and Slade (Lee Ingleby), four friends still haunted by the disappearance of Mark's younger brother Jesse 20 years ago. When Jesse's DNA is discovered at a crime scene, the impossible looks plausible. "*The Five* is a story of hope and possible redemption," Coben explains. "Hope can lift you up or crush your heart like an eggshell."

2 The past infects the present

With all four friends pursuing careers reflecting their guilt over Jesse – Mark is a lawyer, Danny a copper, Pru a doctor and Slade runs a shelter – they must face long-buried demons. "It's as much about unravelling grief and guilt as finding out what's happened," says Cullen. "Mark learns how his history and his past construct who he is, and how brittle that is." Danny, as investigating officer, has to walk a tightrope. "He's professional, but there's also a sense of personal culpability," says Fagbenle. "Danny's dad was involved in the original investigation and someone has been imprisoned for Jesse's murder, so there's a sins-of-the-father thing going on. It's dark, but fantastic fun to play."

3 The twists and turns will keep you guessing

Coben's legendary facility with cliffhangers and curveballs led to the production being codenamed Project Hook. "Only three scripts were finished when I got the job, which was so annoying," laughs Cullen. "I was desperate to know what happened. The whole series is set over two or three weeks, but each episode packs in so much plot, it'll fry your brain."

4 The visuals go against the grain of the cop drama

Standing in for the fictional town of Westbridge is Liverpool, picked when Coben asked for the British equivalent of his native New Jersey's tougher districts. Unusually, the same director was in place for all 10 episodes. "It's been brutal," admits Mark Tonderai, but the decision pays off in spades: there's a visual dynamism, crispness and consistency unusual in British TV. Coben's advocacy of bright colours over rain and trenchcoats, however, left Tonderai in a dilemma. "It wasn't a story that lent itself to that for me," he explains. "It's about things that are broken, so I decided to break up the framing. No one is ever in the camera's crosshairs, everyone is either left or right or low or high until the final episode, when characters move toward the middle of the shot."



5 The reveal won't disappoint

"Only 12 people in the world know the ending," grins Cullen. "And I'm one of them! You won't feel cheated in any way." Fagbenle agrees, citing TV's great fudged ending as a counterpoint. "All your questions will get answered," he promises. "It's not like *Lost*. Every loose end gets tied up in a really satisfying way." Most satisfied, unsurprisingly, is Coben himself. "I get emotional every time I see something that was in my head come to life in a scene. It's exactly the show I wanted it to be." **Gabriel Tate**

ETA | APRIL ***The Five*** **begins this month on Sky 1.**

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

TELL NO ONE (2006)
Guillaume Canet's slick, successful mystery is, remarkably, the only previous screen adap of Coben's work.

GONE GIRL (2014)
David Fincher tackles secrets, lies and shifting perspective, packing in almost as many twists as you'll find in *The Five*.

THE MISSING (2014 -)
Heartrending BBC drama following grieving dad James Nesbitt as he clings to hope that his missing son might still be alive.

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His unfortunate neck injury made navigating the streets somewhat tricky.

Keyboard wizard

Hacker saga has the byte stuff...

MR. ROBOT 15 TBC

Show ★★★★★ Extras ★★★☆☆

2015 **OUT NOW** DIGITAL HD **11 APRIL** DVD, BD



THE MOST DIZZYINGLY original new show of 2015 arrived with minimal buzz during the summer, snowballing from sleeper hit to Golden Globe winner thanks to outstanding lead Rami Malek, its compellingly dark tone and its magnificent manipulation of the audience. Everything about *Mr. Robot* is designed to unbalance you, from its off-centre camera angles to its unreliable protagonist Elliot (Malek), through whose unstable eyes the show's cyberpunk narrative unfolds.

Twitchy, paranoid and desperately lonely, Elliot's a vigilante hacker who dreams of saving the world, but might end up destroying it instead. Haunted by mental illness, he pores over people's private data in lieu of forging real connections, until an anarchist named Mr. Robot (Christian Slater) recruits him for something bigger. Hacktivist group 'FSociety' is working to destroy the financial system by erasing consumer debt, and its first target is the aptly nicknamed Evil Corp, a company with links to Elliot's tragic childhood.

What really grips is the psychological puzzle, as Elliot's hold on reality waxes and wanes. "You're only in my head – we have to remember that," he says apologetically, addressing the audience through a voiceover which is the show's most mind-bending tool, making us weirdly complicit in his delusions.

Slater's comeback has been the headline-grabber, and he's hugely entertaining as the enigmatic Mr. Robot. But Malek's soulful, magnetic performance is on another level. He conveys such a depth of repressed feeling that, even at his most unsettling, Elliot's an anti-hero you want only good things for.

Creator Sam Esmail is in such command of his narrative that none of the late twists feel like a gimmick. *Mr. Robot* is confident and deft, using technology to tell a very human story, and Malek's performance is one of the best you'll see this year. Mediocre extras include a (spoilery) 12-min Making Of and a not-that-funny gag reel. **Emma Dibdin**

EXTRAS › **Making Of** › **Deleted scenes** › **Featurette** › **Gag reel**

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

TAXI DRIVER 1976
Travis Bickle's spiral into insanity in an edgy NYC is echoed in *Mr. Robot*.

FIGHT CLUB 1999
Elliot's unreliable worldview mirrors the Narrator's in very deliberate ways.

AMERICAN PSYCHO 2000
Mr. Robot's nightmarish portrait of corporate America plays like a toned-down version of Patrick Bateman's world.



THE NIGHT MANAGER 15

Show ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

2016 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

PLAYING FAST AND LOOSE WITH ITS John le Carré source material to thrilling effect, the BBC's lush spy drama is much more than Tom Hiddleston's Bond audition. A former soldier turned hotelier in the Alps, Hiddleston's brooding Jonathan Pine is recruited by MI5 to befriend "the worst man in the world" – arms dealer Richard Roper, played with commanding menace by Hugh Laurie. Though episode one feels worryingly like a collection of dressed-up 007 cliches, things improve dramatically once the psychological warfare between Pine, Roper and his posse begins. An impeccably crafted, atmospheric old-school mystery that makes the most of its spectacular ensemble.

Emma Dibdin

EXTRAS › **Interviews**



LONDON SPY 15

Show ★★★★☆ Extras ★★☆☆☆

2015 **OUT 2 MAY** DVD, DIGITAL HD

CONSPIRACIES AND CODE-BREAKING mingle with kinky sex and Class-A drugs in this BBC five-parter, created by *Child 44* novelist Tom Rob Smith. Ben Whishaw is Danny, a young clubber who falls for the mysterious Alex (Edward Holcroft); but when his new lover turns up dead, Danny is sucked into a shady MI5-monitored world that gets increasingly deadly. Co-starring Charlotte Rampling and Jim Broadbent, the series' early episodes are hugely compelling, though that just-one-more feeling diminishes as infuriating twists stack up. Still, Whishaw – offering more substance than his turn as 007 tech-king Q could ever allow – is wonderful. **James Mottram**

EXTRAS › **Featurette**



Duel action

Bird? Plane? No, it's a double dip.

Grandad's greenhouse would never be the same.

BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE – THE ART OF THE FILM/TECH MANUAL

Book ★★★☆☆ Book ★★★★☆

PETER APERLO/ADAM NEWELL & SHARON GOSLING | Titan Books





Imagining a very different Batverse from Christopher Nolan, *Dawn Of Justice* director Zack Snyder tasked production designer Patrick Tatopoulos with rebuilding the DC franchise from scratch. Taking "tougher, bigger and more rugged" as a mantra, Tatopoulos set about designing Batfleck's bulky new look and all his 'redprints' and props are preserved in *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice – Tech Manual*. Some of the smaller details might go unnoticed in Snyder's action scenes, but it's nice to know they're there: the subtle nods to Frank Miller in the mech-suit, the brass knuckles in the bat-gloves and the quotes from mythologist Joseph Campbell woven into Superman's suit and engraved on Wonder Woman's sword.

That said, Supes and Wonders are a bit short-changed by the *Manual* (perhaps because there's less to design for a character who's already had his own film and another who wears a lot less clothes). Still, both get more page space in *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice – The Art Of The Film*. Handsome though it is, there's not actually a lot of 'art' on show; peppered with making-of anecdotes and bulked up with more stills than storyboards, it works best as a glossy souvenir to fill the months between cinema and home-ent. Both books might be essential for die-hard fans – but a single volume combining the two would've worked better for everyone else. **Paul Bradshaw**

THE IMITATION GAME: ALAN TURING DECODED

Book ★★★★☆

JIM OTTAVIANI & LELAND PURVIS | ABRAMS COMIC ARTS



THE LIFE OF ALAN Turing might seem like a slightly off-the-wall choice for a graphic novel. But even the familiarity of his tale – from cracking the Enigma to being persecuted for his homosexuality – is beautifully told here by writer Ottaviani and artist Purvis. It offers an arguably more relatable Turing than Benedict Cumberbatch's Oscar-nommed portrayal – and does a better job of explaining his mathematical breakthroughs to the layman. **Matt Looker**

TERRENCE MALICK: REHEARSING THE UNEXPECTED

Book ★★★★★

CARLO HINTERMANN & DANIELE VILLA | Faber & Faber



ON THE BASIS THAT *Badlands* legend Terrence Malick's films are best experienced, not explained, his and his film's mysteries are well sustained in this interview collection. Malick mavens Sam Shepard and Jack Fisk paint eloquent portraits of a man in rigorous pursuit of an elusive "magic", Sean Penn and Richard Gere praise those mellifluous "Malick moments", while Jessica Chastain concludes wisely: "Watch all his movies again..." **Kevin Harley**

TOPPS: STAR WARS GALAXY/THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Book ★★★★☆

GARY GERANI | ABRAMS BOOKS



THE TRADING-CARD saga continues with two new volumes, one devoted to Topps' 1980 photo-based *Episode V* series, the other showcasing the company's early-'90s collection of illustrated tributes to the original trilogy. The *Empire* book is more sparsely annotated than its *Episode IV* predecessor, but the cards themselves offer an exciting new bonus: completely made-up dialogue. "Greetings, sweet lady!" **Matthew Leyland**

Three more...

From scrapbooks to scrappy books...

ADVENTURE TIME: THE ENCHIRIDION & MARCY'S SUPER SECRET SCRAPBOOK

★★★★☆



For all its weirdness, animated series *Adventure Time* isn't afraid to tug the heartstrings. This covers both bases: The Enchiridion provides belly laughs while Vampire Queen Marceline's secret diary is packed with pathos.

THE ART OF ZOOTROPOLIS

★★★★☆



The next best thing to having a pause button in the cinema, this concept-art compendium grants you a closer look at the myriad boroughs and burrows of Disney's latest animal kingdom. Includes a glimpse of deleted characters: sorry you didn't make it, polar bear in a tank top.

JAMES BOND: THE SECRET HISTORY

★★☆☆☆



There's little to differentiate the workman-like content here from sundry other Bond chronicles. Well, some snarkiness, maybe – though author Sean Egan's opinions might carry more weight if he didn't misquote *Thunderball*...

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Extras

The other stuff we're excited about this month...

LEGO SUPERHEROES

TOYS



Never mind Bats V Supes or Cap V Iron Chap; thanks to these new LEGO sets you can stage the *real* ultimate battle: DC V Marvel! Have a living room race between the new Batmobile and Cap's bike! Throw Lois Lane's enormo camera at Crossbones' death jeep! The spoiler-wary might not want to crack on with the Super Hero Airport Battle set until they've seen *Civil War*, as it includes a BIG reveal – and no, it's not the control-room swivel chair, awesome though it is.

DARK SOULS III

GAME **OUT 12 APRIL**

It's probably time we all recognised there's more to *Dark Souls* than inscrutable stories and excruciating monster difficulty. Part three arrives this month, showing what the series' mazey fantasy landscapes can achieve on new hardware (dead pretty) while delivering a labyrinthine world full of the grotesque and imaginative creature/environment design that's the real star of the saga. Yes, the game's rhythms take a little adjustment, but newcomers shouldn't be put off – this is one of the most rewarding series around.



HIGH-RISE

SOUNDTRACK **OUT NOW**



Clint Mansell occupies uneasy listening's top floor for Ben Wheatley's J.G. Ballard adap (above). After the cavalry-charge orchestral jauntiness of 'Critical Mass', bright future dreams turn moodier. Strange sounds – glass percussion, *Mockingjay*-ish whistling, discordant harp – evoke looming space and oppressive atmospherics; later, stabbing strings mirror mounting agitation. Masterclasses in mood-making, 'Silent Corridors' and 'The World Beyond The High-Rise' embody the state of Mansell's darkly lustrous arts. Just one niggle: where's Portishead's 'SOS'?



BVS METALS DIE CAST

FIGURES **OUT NOW**

"Caution – Heavy" it warns on the box art for these *Dawn Of Justice* collectables. OK, you won't break a wrist, but you probably wouldn't want to drop one on your foot – especially not Armoured Batman. The armour's removable, so you could have Armoured Superman if you like, though that does seem a bit like taping a steak knife to a nuclear warhead. Brought to you by Underground Toys, they're strikingly stylised – Wonder Woman's got eyes like Galaxy Minstrels, Superman like Viagra pills.

STAR WARS HEADSPACE

ALBUM **OUT NOW**



The fun of the Force is with this set of electro-dance *Star Wars* homages, sculpted from iconic samples. Heavy inhalations, clamorous cantinas, droid blips, giddy "Yaaa-hoos!": everything fits under producers Rick Rubin/Kevin Kusatsu's watch. Claude VonStroke's 'R2 Knows' fizzes, Röyksopp's 'Bounty Hunters' broods, Shag Kava's 'Jabba Flow' skanks, Breakbot's 'Star Tripper' glows: consider Endor's next party/comedown music lovingly sorted.

INSTANT EXPERT

Elvis Presley

Screen King...



"I know I can be a great actor," Elvis Presley said. He tried to prove it in 1956's *Love Me Tender* by taking third billing and dying on screen. Michael Curtiz (*Casablanca*) directed him to better reviews in *King Creole* (1958), but flopped attempts at high emotion in Don Siegel's *Flaming Star* (1960) and Philip Dunne's *Wild In The Country* (1961) suggested audiences wanted another Presley. Although Elvis revered Brando and Dean, Paramount and his manager, Colonel Tom Parker, set out to 'package' Presley.



Presley was no bad boy, but some of his '50s films played to that contrived media image. In *Loving You* (1957), he swivels his midriff like a man trying to drill to the Earth's core during an impromptu café run-through of 'Mean Woman Blues'. When he gets into the inevitable fight, one screaming girl looks positively orgasmic as he pummels a dude into the jukebox. But it was 1957's *Jailhouse Rock* that made his movie decade swing. Presley imbues violent ex-con Vince Everett with edgy energy and animal passion.



Paramount struggled to place Presley in films until 1960's *GI Blues* and 1961's *Blue Hawaii* banked a formula: songs, sunny locales, saucy romps, bad reviews, 'boffo' box office. A decade of vicarious vacation movies followed. The plots thinned out as a disenchanted Presley gained weight. *Easy Come, Easy Go*'s yoga sketch (1967) chafed the barrel but studios milked their cash-King dry until his last film, 1969's Mary Tyler Moore nun drama *Change Of Habit*.



Presley's death deprived us of a chance to see him as an OAP fighting soul-suckers in a rest home, but Bruce Campbell merrily obliged in Don Coscarelli's delirious *Bubba Ho-Tep* (2002). Elvis' cultural clout can be measured by his influence on everything from 2011's *Arthur Christmas* ("Santa has left the building!") to Jim Jarmusch's *Mystery Train* (1989) and films about him. Kurt Russell curled a lip in John Carpenter's *Elvis: The Movie* (1979); Michael Shannon dons the quiff in this May's *Elvis & Nixon*.



As his film career croaked, Elvis was reborn on stage. He dripped cool in NBC's '68 *Comeback Special*; then, multiple Elvis personas met for 1970's *Elvis: That's The Way It Is*, where he goof-balled and karate-kicked through a Vegas show. The *Woodstock* movie out-grossed it, so 1972's follow-up pinched one of that film's editors to energise its attack: Martin Scorsese. The trailer voiceover for *Elvis On Tour* ("Elvis – as you may never see him again.") was sadly apt: he looked spent in his final concert film, 1977's *Elvis In Concert*. **KH**

Key movies



JAILHOUSE ROCK
1957 ★★★

Songs'n'stripes. MGM's musical melodrama played to Presley's swivel-hipped pitch: as romantic ex-con Vince Everett, he attacks the all-singing good ol' bad boy energetically.



KING CREOLE
1958 ★★★★

Granted an extension on his army draft obligation, Presley used it to make his best film. Michael Curtiz directs him as a New Orleans bus-boy plagued with mob worries.



VIVA LAS VEGAS
1964 ★★★

Cheesy? You bet, but Presley shimmies up a saucy storm with liquid-hipped Ann-Margret on 'C'mon Everybody' in this light-footed romcom: his last decent movie.



ELVIS: THAT'S THE WAY IT IS
1970 ★★★★

Eight Panavision cameras, multiple Presleys. Elvis flaunted regained relevance and commitment in a Vegas showcase of R&B, gospel, country, blues, pop and even comedy know-how.

Vital statistics

3
Number of days *Love Me Tender* took to recoup costs

31
Number of movies Presley acted in over 13 years

79
Weeks spent in Billboard chart by *Blue Hawaii*

6239
Elvis' inmate number in *Jailhouse Rock*

ALLSTAR

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RANT

Is it just me?

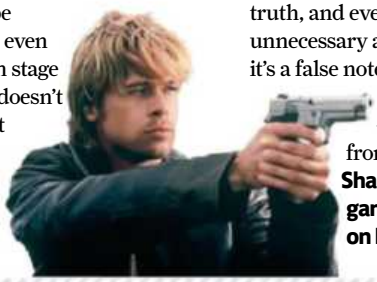
...or should actors not bother with accents? *asks Matt Glasby*

'Stars can't (and arguably shouldn't) hide who they are'

EVERY FILM LOVER HAS A Favourite Accent Fail (FAF). Whether the Transatlantic Cockney of Dick Van Dyke (*Mary Poppins*) or Don Cheadle (*Ocean's Eleven*), neither born, it's fair to conjecture, within the sound of the Bow Bells. Or the seesawing Irish of Tom Cruise (*Far And Away*), Tommy Lee Jones (*Blown Away*) or repeat offender Brad Pitt (*The Devil's Own*, *Snatch* – do note the comma here). Some try too hard: think Nic Cage what-a-mistake-a-to-make-a-ing his way through *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* in cartoon Italian despite *actually being (part) Italian*. Some, not at all: recall Keanu Reeves' Victorian surfer dude in *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. A personal FAF is Pierce Brosnan in 1988 obscurity *Taffin*, mangling his own Irish brogue with speech patterns that have never before troubled the human tongue. Just google, "Then MAYBE you SHOULDN'T be *LIVING HERE*!" Truly, it's a gift that keeps on giving.

Problem is, actors don't know if they can pull off a certain accent until they try, and by then it's often too late. Justin Kurzel's magnificent *Macbeth* had one tiny but crucial flaw: none of the main cast managed to sound consistently Scottish. But the real question is not why they failed, but why they bothered in the first place. *Macbeth* was written 400 years ago by an Englishman, directed by an Aussie, adapted by Americans and stars a German-Irish man and a French woman – did anyone really expect a sociolinguistic study of Dark Ages Scots? Plus, these things don't *need* to be accurate, just convincing. And film actors – even ones as fine as Fassbender, Cotillard, Harris and Considine – are always most believable in their own voices. The truth comes not from accents, costumes and accoutrements, but from inside.

Victorian performer Henry Irving summed up the secrets of his craft thus: "Speak clearly and be human." And this is even truer on film than on stage because the camera doesn't just detect bullshit, it magnifies it. Look at the careers of Sean Connery, Michael Caine, John Wayne and Clint Eastwood: four acting Oscars between them, and exactly as many successful accents. Admittedly they aren't the most versatile of performers, but they convince when they're playing minutely modulated versions of themselves, just like Cruise, Pitt and Cage. Character actors can disappear into their parts because we don't know anything about them, but stars can't (and arguably shouldn't) hide who they are. It's why we keep watching them.

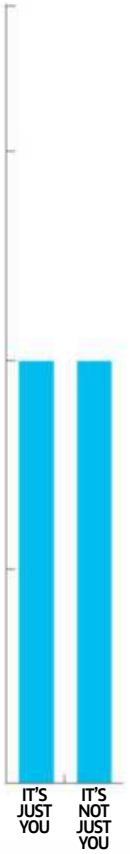


Yes, some of the big names get away with it – Gwyneth Paltrow and Nicole Kidman, for example, do an excellent posh English – but it feels like they're playing caricatures, not people, giving impressions rather than performances, so it's harder to forget that what you're watching is fiction. Film is a series of lies attempting to tell the truth, and every single element that calls unnecessary attention to itself – whether it's a false note or a fake nose, eye-rolling CGI or ear-splitting Cockney – only takes us further away from that truth. Or is it just me?

Share your reaction at www.gamesradar.com/totalfilm or on Facebook and Twitter.

OFFICE-OMETER

The *TF* staff verdict is in!



LAST MONTH...

In *TF*244, Matt Looker argued that we need more superhero movies, not fewer. You respond...

KALLUM JOHN SHORTHOUSE
I'd like to see more, but with different styles. Marvel films all really have the same structure – that's what's getting boring. Seeing something different is refreshing. That's why *Deadpool* was great.

ANDREW JONES
One good one every 10 years is enough for me. We've been saturated with crap.

TRIB EY
Loving the *MCU*, excited about *DCU*. *Deadpool* awesome. Answer has to be MORE!

MICHELLE PATON
More and more. Big budget, low budget, all good.

OWEN J. ROONEY
It's just you.

CYANBUTTON
Seems there are dozens of heroes and heroines out there. The silver screen could bring to light a few of the more compelling, but unrecognised, diamonds in the rough. It will take filmmakers that respect the material to make them truly shine.



ORANGEBONE
I would like to see more adaptations of non-superhero comics.



The hairdresser's patter had morphed from informal to very, very personal.

Heil society

THE PRODUCERS | Must the show go on?

MEL BROOKS' 1967 BROADWAY SATIRE operates at nervous-breakdown pitch and by all accounts was just as stressful to make. Its centrepiece is the gloriously awful musical *Springtime For Hitler*, designed to fail by scheming impresario Max Bialystock (Zero Mostel) and his accountant Leo Bloom (Gene Wilder), so they can run off with the money. What could possibly go right?



1 Curtain up. On stage a chorus line of Bavarian peasants sings about Germany's pre-WW2 woes and introduces "the man for you and me": Adolf Hitler himself.



2 Dancing girls in skimpy outfits begin performing musical number 'Springtime For Hitler'. From the stalls, Bialystock and Bloom point and laugh, their fortunes assured...



3 The audience remains unconvinced. Song-and-dance SS officers break out the jazz-hands. "Don't be stupid, be a smarty," entreats one, "come and join the Nazi party!"



4 High-kicking SS showgirls appear as Bialystock and Bloom smile and sing along. The showgirls salute, then start goose-stepping across the stage.



5 Machine-gun fire punctuates the fun, as the actors form a swastika of dancing Nazis. One couple leaves the theatre, complaining, "Well, talk about bad taste!"



6 The song turns into an über-camp Nuremberg Rally and climaxes to complete silence. One man applauds, but is beaten into submission. Our heroes make a swift exit... **Matt Glasby**

***The Producers* is available on DVD, Blu-ray and VOD now.**

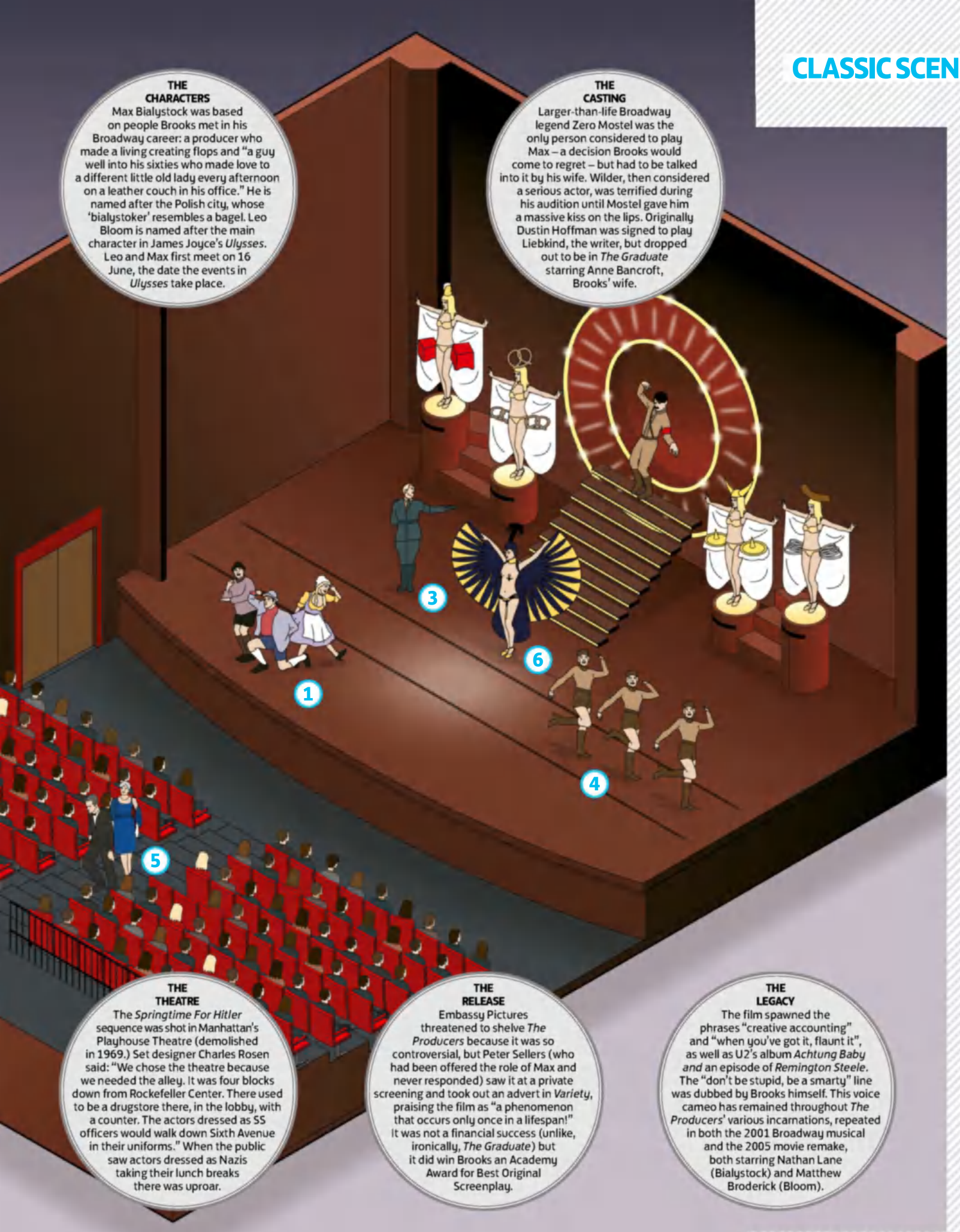
THE ORIGINS
Comedian Mel Brooks had a TV show – *Get Smart* – behind him, but wanted to break into films. 'Springtime For Hitler' came to him, as a joke, when a reporter asked what he was working on next. He shopped the treatment around Hollywood for six years. Nobody would touch it, although Universal said they'd consider 'Springtime For Mussolini' instead. Eventually Embassy Pictures gave Brooks 40 days and $941,000 to make it. "We couldn't go a penny over," he recalled.

THE WRITER
"I didn't know if the character Kenneth Mars was playing was crazy or if Kenneth Mars was crazy," said Wilder of the actor chosen to replace Hoffman. Mars was originally supposed to be playing director Roger De Bris (Christopher Hewett), but insisted that Brooks let him read for Liebkind. Nobody doubted his commitment. Throughout the shoot, he kept his Nazi costume on – even sleeping in it – until it started to smell. Mostel was not impressed.



THE SHOOT
"Zero Mostel was heaven and hell," said Brooks of his brilliant but demanding lead. Mostel had been hit by a bus years before, and had it written into his contact that he could go home early whenever the pain flared up. As a debut director, Brooks was way out of his depth. More used to the pace of TV, he was impatient at the film's slow progress, and clashed badly with Mostel (who he called a "fat pig"). Whenever they butted heads, Mostel threatened to leave.

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THE CHARACTERS

Max Bialystock was based on people Brooks met in his Broadway career: a producer who made a living creating flops and "a guy well into his sixties who made love to a different little old lady every afternoon on a leather couch in his office." He is named after the Polish city, whose 'bialystoker' resembles a bagel. Leo Bloom is named after the main character in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Leo and Max first meet on 16 June, the date the events in *Ulysses* take place.

THE CASTING

Larger-than-life Broadway legend Zero Mostel was the only person considered to play Max – a decision Brooks would come to regret – but had to be talked into it by his wife. Wilder, then considered a serious actor, was terrified during his audition until Mostel gave him a massive kiss on the lips. Originally Dustin Hoffman was signed to play Liebkind, the writer, but dropped out to be in *The Graduate* starring Anne Bancroft, Brooks' wife.

THE THEATRE

The *Springtime For Hitler* sequence was shot in Manhattan's Playhouse Theatre (demolished in 1969.) Set designer Charles Rosen said: "We chose the theatre because we needed the alley. It was four blocks down from Rockefeller Center. There used to be a drugstore there, in the lobby, with a counter. The actors dressed as SS officers would walk down Sixth Avenue in their uniforms." When the public saw actors dressed as Nazis taking their lunch breaks there was uproar.

THE RELEASE

Embassy Pictures threatened to shelve *The Producers* because it was so controversial, but Peter Sellers (who had been offered the role of Max and never responded) saw it at a private screening and took out an advert in *Variety*, praising the film as "a phenomenon that occurs only once in a lifespan!" It was not a financial success (unlike, ironically, *The Graduate*) but it did win Brooks an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay.

THE LEGACY

The film spawned the phrases "creative accounting" and "when you've got it, flaunt it", as well as U2's album *Achtung Baby and* an episode of *Remington Steele*. The "don't be stupid, be a smarty" line was dubbed by Brooks himself. This voice cameo has remained throughout *The Producers*' various incarnations, repeated in both the 2001 Broadway musical and the 2005 movie remake, both starring Nathan Lane (Bialystock) and Matthew Broderick (Bloom).

ILLUSTRATION BY JASON PICKERSGILL/ACUTE GRAPHICS

60 SECOND SCREENPLAY



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SPOILER ALERT!

FADE IN:

INT: THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT AARON ECKHART and Secret Service Rottweiler GERARD BUTLER perform their morning workout: 2k jog, 300 high-fives, half an hour of mutual backslapping; then an extended warm-down of smug grinning.

PRESIDENT AARON ECKHART
I love you, maaaan!

GERARD BUTLER
I love you more!

PRESIDENT AARON ECKHART
I love you most! Yay! Let's do it again!

INT: GERARD'S HOUSE
As we learn that RADHA MITCHELL has stepped up from thankless wife to thankless pregnant wife, GERARD works on the most unconvincing resignation letter ever written.

GERARD BUTLER
[*writes*] "Wassup, Big Dawg! I'm resigning. No I am. Stop rolling on the floor. It's been an honour and a privilege to shoot, stab and torture so many evil stereotypes for you. Yours, G. PS: I realise that according to movie logic, writing this letter will trigger an international incident."

As GERARD hovers over 'Send', the British Prime Minister drops dead. As part of the state-funeral arrangements, the producers put out a casting call for dodgy world-leader lookalikes.

INT: 'AAR' FORCE ONE

PRESIDENT AARON ECKHART
To London! Let's use the flight to catch up on play-fighting and coining nicknames! You with me, G-Bear?

GERARD BUTLER
[*Headlocking Aaron*] On it like a car bonnet, my little Eck-ing ball!

EXT: UNFALLEN LONDON
As the world's leaders gather, terrorists launch a huge attack, working in cahoots with the tourist board to ensure that each bigwig buys it in front of a different landmark.

TV NEWSREADER
...Scenes of ropey CGI destruction like something out of the mid-'90s. If you're in the area, do watch out for falling polygons.

Meanwhile, on both sides of the Atlantic the overqualified supporting cast loiters in small rooms.

VICE PRESIDENT MORGAN FREEMAN
Great! I get to spend the rest of the film sitting down! This'll make *Deep Impact* look like hard work!

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE MELISSA LEO
Great! I get to spend the rest of the film distracting everyone with my awful wig! This'll make *The Equalizer* look like a respectable drama!

POLICE CHIEF COLIN SALMON
Great! I get to spend the rest of the film going "Hmmm..." in front of some monitors! This'll make... actually, isn't that what I used to do in all those Bond movies?

TV NEWSREADER
...And in other news, the rest of the world is safe today because there are seemingly more terrorists in London than there are Londoners.

RADHA MITCHELL
I can't believe this is happening! Playing the weepy wife sobbing "I can't believe this is happening!" at the telly!

GERARD and PRESIDENT AARON flee through the city, weaving between outbreaks of shonky stock footage.

PRESIDENT AARON ECKHART
Where are all the extras? What is this, *28 Days Later*? Are we going to bump into Cillian Murphy with a Sainsbury's bag?

The duo reach an MI6 safehouse, where they discover that a government mole has been arming the baddies with plot clichés.

PRESIDENT AARON ECKHART
I've been kidnapped! They're going to film my murder on YouTube! You ANIMALS!

SAS BLOKE
So, Gerard, you want to me blow up the building while you Rambo about with a machine gun? I don't know you from Adam, everyone's a suspect... go ahead, chum!

GERARD executes people and reveals an immunity to giant fireballs.

INT: GERARD'S HOUSE

GERARD BUTLER
[*reading back his letter*] "Now my job is done, I feel I should spend more time with my beloved... see you Monday my ol' POTUS-flower!"

FIN

NEXT ISSUE: BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE

WORDS: MATTHEW LEYLAND

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- We hook up with a few Xs! Brace for carnage!
- The franchises that time forgot – un-forgotten!
- A curiouser and curiouser blockbuster exclusive...
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